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A Perceptual Study of the Impact of Athletic Programs in Selected  
Community Colleges in the State of Tennessee

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A dissertation  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Education

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by  
Lee Martin Cigliano  
May 2006

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Dr. Nancy Dishner, Chair  
Dr. Glenn Bettis  
Dr. Terry Tollefson  
Dr. Tom Coates

Keywords: Education, Athletics, Funding, Program Cuts, Impact

## ABSTRACT

### A Perceptual Study of the Impact of Athletic Programs in Selected Community Colleges in the State of Tennessee

by

Lee Martin Cigliano

The purpose of the study was to examine the economic, institutional, and human impact of athletic programs at community colleges in the Tennessee Board of Regents community college system to determine how the athletic programs affects the benefits, or lack of benefits, for students, the institutions, and the communities.

Sixteen participants were interviewed: two presidents, two athletic directors, four coaches, and eight student-athletes. The student-athletes represented four different sports and came from a variety of educational backgrounds and academic standing. The primary benefits perceived for the institutions and the student-athletes were the impact on missions, enrollment, educational and athletic opportunities, and retention. The primary negative impacts perceived were the lack of preparation for college work by high school graduates inside and outside the athletic programs and the difficulties in recruiting the best academic student-athletes.

Some administrative and athletic participants perceived the lack of preparation of high school graduates to do college work as a great obstacle for some student-athletes and others in the community colleges. Emergent themes included time management, the stress of maintaining dual paths in academics and athletics, and the need of good housing environment.

Mentoring by coaches, motivation to progress in academics, and the assistance of student development services and faculty and staff were perceived by the student-athletes as being beneficial to their success and progress.

The implication from this study is that student-athletes represent a variety of socioeconomic and diverse backgrounds that may impact educational backgrounds. They also represent a variety of academic levels that vary from year to year. Student-athletes are successful, with planning and assistance, in reaching their educational and career goals. The problem of remedial education is an obstacle for some of them, for the institution, and for the state. To become successful in increasing the number of Tennesseans who attain higher education levels, the obstacle needs to be addressed in the community college system and, more importantly, in the elementary and secondary schools.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, Jim Cigliano, for his enduring example of service and dedication to students and his influence on me to strive for balance in my academic and athletic goals. His unwavering support of me, his encouragement and great wit, and his advice to strive to “give your best wherever you are” has motivated me all of my life.

This work is also dedicated to my mother, Georgia Cigliano, for her constant support in all of my endeavors and her belief that planning and achieving higher goals is possible if you work the plan.

Finally, this work is dedicated to my dear wife, Beth, for her love, patience and understanding, her loyalty, and her enduring support of my goals.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *General Information*

What is it about sports or athletics that causes such debate in higher education institutions? Athletics is a part of daily life; millions of youth participate inside and outside the educational arena, and millions participate in sports throughout their lives with many of them participating as professionals in chosen income-earning vocations. Athletics permeates human life, as do all the humanities, in much the same way as music, art, politics, and theatre. Athletics is entertainment, physical development, social interaction, and business.

The ancient Greeks left a legacy for the ideal of athletic endeavors. Citizens from all parts of Greece were drawn to the Panhellenic Games with the enthusiasm and support of four great festivals (Bowra, 1977). The Olympic Games at Olympia and the Pythian Games at Delphi were held every four years; the Nemean Games at Argolis and the Isthmian Games at Corinth were held every two years. The games possessed a religious fervor, for they were held to honor the gods. Most cities held similar games and festivals. Wars were put aside for the games with some cities being fined for violating the sacred truce (Bowra).

Would the Greeks be amazed today? Would they appreciate the fervor of the baseball World Series, the Super Bowl of professional football, the NCAA championship games in basketball, the Masters Golf Tournament, the modern-day Olympics, the Tennessee Titans, or the 100,000-plus Big Orange fans at Neyland Stadium? Is the basis for these activities the same? Is there pride in physical fitness, fierce competition for the honor and love of the game, intensive training to develop excellence, or rewards for the victory?

The Greeks might not recognize the modern-day world of athletics and sports. What they began as festivals to honor their gods, to strive for excellence, and to bring people together was

competition on an individual basis. There is evidence of games that resemble hockey, ball games, or other group games, but team sports or pastimes were never part of the ancient Olympics. Today the Greeks would see a modern-day picture of athletics with a tremendous growth of activities, recreation, developmental programs, educational settings, student-athlete scholarships, and billion-dollar industries supplying jobs and income for millions of people.

Humankind has inherited a great legacy from the Greeks: philosophy, science, the fine arts, medicine, astronomy, and geography (Bowra, 1977). Along with the foundation for our academic world, they left a legacy for the worth of the individual, a basis for a civilized society, and a passion for fitness and athletics. What they deemed as worthy, modern-day humankind appears to echo. The Greeks, however, did not face the costs of athletic venues being held today. Rewards of garlands of wild olive leaves, 100 vases of olive oil, front-row seats to all public spectacles, exemption from taxation (this might be a deal for some today), or statues of honor might not cover the costs today (Bowra). Nor would those rewards likely attract participants in today's world.

If all the athletic venues were taken away today, it is difficult to imagine what the financial fallout would be for the many businesses and industries that support such venues. It is also difficult to predict what would replace the local, regional, and national pastimes. The venues of sports and athletics are recreation, entertainment, and big business.

Activity that takes place in local and regional sports programs feeds the national programs and venues by providing jobs, trained athletes, coaches, and staff for the professional and amateur teams and tournaments. The availability of television and print coverage provides, in turn, added stimulus and goal-setting opportunities for student-athletes and educational institutions.

Despite the popularity and the many businesses promoting and depending upon athletics, the status and the face of athletics are changing. There are those critics who believe that too much emphasis is placed on athletics, and the solution is simply to eliminate most athletic

activities. Still, others believe in the value of athletics, but do not want to, or cannot, support the costs. That is one of the hotly debated issues prevalent today in institutions of higher education. With increasing demands on state budgets to cover the costs of higher education, lawmakers and administrative boards are seeking areas for cuts. Cost-effective evaluation is applied in many situations to determine the continuance of athletic programs (Illinois Community College Board, 1994). Often, however, the first area chosen for cuts or elimination is athletic programs without making a thorough study of determining cost-effective justification (Illinois Community College Board).

Dropping athletic programs from state universities and community colleges removes the opportunities for many student-athletes to follow their career goals of obtaining an education while pursuing future success in athletics. A similar situation could be faced by those students interested in music and art if their opportunities to continue were limited.

### *Statement of the Problem*

In recent years, the state of Tennessee has been dealing with severe budget deficits. As a result, appropriations for higher education have been cut significantly compelling the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) to develop action plans. Those plans include the cuts and elimination of all state support of athletic programs at state institutions of higher learning by the academic year 2007-2008 (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2002).

State universities in the Tennessee system have already faced deep cuts forcing some universities to reduce programs, eliminate programs, and find other sources of revenue. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's athletic budgets have been cut annually for the last three years (Biddle, 2004). East Tennessee State University cut its football program after THEC revealed its action plan to eliminate funds for athletics (Watson, 2004). The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, whose football program generates revenue to cover the cost of many

other athletic programs including programs for women that are overseen by Title IX regulations, suffered some funding cuts in the spring and summer of 2004 when state budget crises caused the summer program for student-athletes and staff to cut back on activities (Watson).

The problem of making difficult choices to either reduce or eliminate an athletic program should be based on a clear knowledge of the possible negative or positive impact of such actions. Knowing what the proposed cuts or elimination of programs could mean to so many students, I was compelled to study the problem. As a product of the influences that participation in athletics can make on a person's life through family, the educational systems of primary schools, secondary schools, community colleges, and 4-year colleges, I have been moved to study the problem through the eyes of all the parties involved in the community college athletic systems. The purpose of the study was to examine the economic, institutional, and human impact of athletic programs at two community colleges in the TBR system. There are 13 community colleges in the TBR system, 3 of which do not offer athletic programs (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2000).

### *Research Questions*

The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of TBR community college presidents, athletic directors, coaches, and student-athletes concerning the impact of athletics on their community colleges?
2. What are the perceptions of college and athletic administrators regarding the extent to which participation in athletics at TBR community colleges assists students in reaching their goals past college?
3. What are the perceptions of student-athletes regarding the role of athletics in preparing them for future careers?

### *Significance of the Study*

Many community colleges have already faced reduced funding from state budgets and have been compelled to support their athletic programs by other means. Booster clubs, fund-raising events, corporate donations, alumni donations, and student fees are some of the means colleges are using to maintain such programs. As state legislators face budget deficits and decide to make educational funding the item to cut, athletic programs in the collegiate systems become an easy target.

The significance of this study is that few data exist (state-wide or nationally) to use as tools in determining the impact of athletics on sponsoring institutions and supportive communities. With so many people involved in athletics, college presidents and governing bodies need more information to use as a tool in determining program benefits, or lack of benefits, for students, the institution, and the community.

In recent years, the state of Tennessee has been dealing with severe budget deficits. As a result, appropriations for higher education have been cut significantly, compelling the THEC and the TBR to develop action plans. Those plans include cutting and eventually eliminating all state support of athletic programs at state institutions of higher learning (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2002).

### *Delimitations and Limitations of the Study*

This study was confined to 2 of the 10 community colleges that have athletic programs in the TBR Community College System. The results of this study are not generalizable to other college settings. The 10 institutions were: Chattanooga State Technical Community College, Cleveland State Community College, Columbia State Community College, Dyersburg State Community College, Jackson State Community College, Motlow State Community College, Roane State Community College, Southwest Tennessee Community College, Volunteer State Community College, and Walters State Community College. Three other community colleges in

the TBR system do not have athletic programs: Nashville State Technical Community College, Mississippi State Technical Community College, and Northeast State Technical Community College.

No analysis was made of revenue generated by academic programs, except for student-athletes who are required by the National Junior College Athletic Association (2000) to be full-time students. No analysis was made of 4-year colleges and universities. No generalizations were made to other 2-year community colleges in the state of Tennessee.

### *Definitions*

1. *Athletically-related student aid*--Any scholarship, grant, or other form of financial assistance offered by an institution, the terms of which require the recipient to participate in a program of intercollegiate athletics at the institution. Other student aid, of which a student-athlete simply happens to be the recipient, is not athletically related student aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2001b).
2. *Community college*--An institution providing post-secondary education and accredited to award associate degrees for two years of collegiate-level instruction or to award certificates in numerous occupational and paraprofessional fields (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).
3. *Economic impact*--“The difference between existing economic activity in a region given the presence of the institution and the level that would have been present if the institution did not exist” (Beck, Elliot, Meisel, & Wagner, 1995, p. 248).
4. *Expenses*--Expenses attributable to intercollegiate athletic activities. This includes appearance, guarantees, and options athletically related to student aid, contract services, equipment, fund-raising activities, operating expenses, promotional activities, recruiting expenses, salaries and benefits, supplies, travel, and other



- expenses attributable to intercollegiate athletic activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2001b).
5. *Full Time Equivalent (FTE)*--The total number of degree credits taken by all students divided by 15 (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2002).
  6. *National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)*--The governing body for a voluntary association of about 1,200 member colleges and universities that oversees tournaments and intercollegiate athletic programs (NCAA, 2005).
  7. *National Junior Community College Athletic Association (NJCCAA)*--the governing body of intercollegiate athletics for 2-year colleges (NCAA).
  8. *Revenues*--Revenues attributable to intercollegiate athletic activities. This includes revenues from appearance guarantees and options, an athletic conference, tournament or bowl games, concessions, contributions from alumni and others, institutional support, program advertising and sales, radio and television, royalties, signage and other sponsorships, sports camps, state or other government support, student activity fees, ticket and luxury box sales, and any other revenues attributable to intercollegiate athletic activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2001b).
  9. *Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR)*--The governing body of the State University and Community College System of Tennessee, created in 1972 by the General Assembly of the State Legislature (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2001a).
  10. *Tennessee Junior and Community College Athletic Association (TJCCAA)*--This is the governing body for 11 Tennessee members in the NJCCAA; it ensures that member schools follow state rules and regulations concerning all aspects of operation, including player eligibility and scholarship limits (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2002).
  11. *Retention rate*--“A measure of academic progression of a group of students from one period of time to the next. The definition of the cohort may vary according to the

subject of interests, however, the most common cohorts studied are first-time/full-time, degree-seeking freshman students and all beginning freshman students” (Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, 2006, n. p.).

### *Overview of the Study*

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study by providing information regarding the status of athletic programs in institutions of higher learning including costs, funding, and impacts on institutions. In addition, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, delimitations and limitations, and definitions of terms used in the study are given. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature of collegiate athletic programs including costs, funding, program cuts, reforms, and impacts on institutions of post-secondary education. Chapter 3 contains methods for collecting data, the participants, and the methods for analyzing the data. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data collected. Chapter 5 presents the summary and conclusions of the study and provides recommendations for future practice and future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

Participation in athletics, a common human behavior, is an activity that permeates our society, educationally, financially, psychologically, and politically. To determine the effect of athletics on our educational institutions and to fulfill the goal of this study, literature was reviewed to understand the historical and current state of athletics in colleges and universities.

The initial review included five computer databases: First Search, ERIC, InfoTrac, Dissertation Abstracts, and SportsDisc. Additional sources reviewed included journals, periodicals, organizational reports, regulation manuals, published books, and related textbooks.

Because the review of literature involved more sources for 4-year collegiate athletic programs than for 2-year collegiate programs, the researcher assumed some commonality in economic, institutional, and student athlete concerns of athletic programs in postsecondary educational institutions.

Fewer studies of 2-year collegiate athletics have been made; nevertheless, the justification for conducting athletic programs has the same basis as that for 4-year institutions: need, mission of the institution, and cost. This chapter will review literature related to current topics associated with the impact of athletics in postsecondary institutions.

#### *Cost of Athletics*

The rising costs of athletic programs in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)-Division I colleges and universities and leaner overall institution budgets are forcing schools to weigh the costs and benefits of such programs. During the past 15 to 20 years, many colleges and universities have seen rising costs, deficits, and funding crises (Sylwester &

Witosky, 2004). According to a study published in *USA Today* by Sylwester and Witosky, spending on intercollegiate athletics by Division I schools increased an average of 25%, compared to a 10% increase in university spending.

The University of Louisville had maintained its athletic program for 20 years, wholly supported by sports revenue and contributions. After building a new corporate-sponsored football stadium, adding several women's sports, paying rising insurance premiums, travel costs, as well as scholarship costs, and hiring notable coach Rick Pitino to revive its lagging basketball program, the university found its athletic program in debt. Cost-cutting measures, ticket price increases, and new corporate sponsorships were not enough to keep Louisville's athletic program competitive. Louisville began to support the athletic program under one umbrella in 2004 to become what athletic director Tim Jurich called "something special" (Sylwester & Witosky, 2004, n. p.).

The desire to be more competitive has lured 12 schools to move their football programs to NCAA Division I since the 1994-95 academic year. With the lure of bowl games, television coverage, and lucrative men's basketball tournaments, the number of schools in Division I increased by 24 in the 1994-1995 academic year (Sylwester & Witosky, 2004).

A study by Blum (1994) revealed that NCAA colleges and universities spent more on athletic programs than they earned. Increased costs of programs were forcing many institutions to consider elimination of programs. According to Blum, a 1989 survey by the NCAA showed that high spending on athletic programs was the result of increases to provide athletic scholarships and programs for women. Money earned by athletics in 1993, however, was an increase over 1989 earnings.

Mangan's (1996) research revealed that the University of Houston, like many other Division I and Division II colleges and universities, operated its athletic program at a deficit. Even though the University of Houston's athletic program had operated with budget deficits for 12 to 14 years, the president and other officials did not want to eliminate the program because of

the positive influences that athletics had made on the university. The program was also considered important to the community. However, large deficits compelled the university to evaluate the role of intercollegiate athletics on its campus. In the university's 1996 strategic plan, strategies were outlined to increase attendance, raise more money for athletics, and improve the academic performance of athletes (Mangan, 1996).

Naughton (1996) found that few college athletic programs were prosperous and few made money. Naughton cited a study on economics of college sports by Sheehan, an economics professor at Notre Dame. Sheehan's study exposed what he called a myth that most football programs pay for the entire athletics program. Sheehan found that only 30-35 institutions had comfortable and consistent surplus from football and men's basketball programs (Naughton).

The University of Pittsburgh revealed in a report by its athletic department (Steele, 1997) that its program generated nearly \$9.95 million in revenues, while expenses were just over \$17.98 million. The football program cost \$1.12 million more than it earned; the men's basketball program produced \$1 million more than it cost; other men's sports cost \$2.02 million more than they earned; women's basketball cost \$992,710 more than earned, and other women's sports cost \$1.88 million more than earned. The report revealed that university money substantially supported athletics (Steele, 1997). Fast forward to the year 2000 and the university's total subsidy of athletics was \$10.98 million, an increase from the 1996 figure of \$8 million. According to Steele (2001), the U.S. Higher Education Act of 1998 required schools participating in Title IV or Higher Education Act programs to disclose budget information of their athletic programs.

Gerking and Rhoads (2000) studied the effects of successful Division I football and basketball programs' motivation on charitable educational donations by alumni and others to U.S. universities. Data for the study came from 87 universities that had football and basketball teams participating in NCAA Division I during the 1986-87 to 1995-96 academic years. The

observation was made that current and past administrators of the universities apparently believed that gains came from investing in athletics.

While some colleges have seen a bump in applications and donations with their expanded programs and moves to Division I programs, others have not. Selingo (1997) cited Northeastern Illinois University's plans to move out of the Division I program because of the costs and no increase in donations. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, however, was beginning to see benefits from their expansion to Division I; applications and donations were up. The athletic director at UNC-Greensboro, in hindsight, encouraged other institutions to conduct more open debate before any expansion of programs to Division I status (Chressanthis & Grimes, 1994).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2002) and the U.S. Department of Education (2001a), fund expenditures per student at public colleges rose about 2% between 1985-86 and 1990-91 and an additional 16% between 1990-91 and 1999-2000. Inflation-adjusted scholarship and fellowship expenditures per full-time equivalent expenditures per student at public universities rose 63% between 1985-86 and 1990-91 compared with 8% for instruction expenditures per student. These statistical data reveal that scholarships and fellowships expenditures per student grew more rapidly than did other parts of education budgets of public colleges and universities. The rising costs and expenditures of athletic programs appear to mirror the rising costs of education generally. Large increases in enrollment, especially by women and minorities, have added to the overall budget crises for state institutions that are facing reduced funding from the states (National Center for Education Statistics).

### *Funding*

Mangan (1994) found that many institutions were being forced to find other means of supporting athletic programs that were deeply affected by reduced state funding and budget cuts. With colleges facing reduced funding, cuts to programs, programs operating on deficit budgets

or making no profit, and outright elimination of programs, efforts have been made to review the traditional areas of funding and look for new sources or cost-effective measures and promotional activities to save the programs for an athletic department (Stier, 1988).

Traditional sources of funding have been varied: state funds based on enrollment figures, funds allotted to physical education departments, federal funds via grants and financial aid or loans, student tuition, alumni gifts, corporate donors, student fees, tickets and related sales, money raised locally, booster clubs, and fund-raising events (Peery & Raepple, 1980).

In the community college system of Tennessee, governed by the TBR, no state appropriated funds coming from general revenues of the state may be used for athletics (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2001b). Funds appeared to come to the athletic programs; however, this was based on athletes being students first. Funding for some budget items, although, are shared and/or prorated between physical education departments and athletic programs. Salaries were also prorated delineating activities and job responsibilities for coaches, professors, and staff positions (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2001b). The funding for athletic programs in this system appeared to come to the athletic programs, but only on the basis that each athlete is, and must be, a full-time student. Funds for the balance of athletic programs in the community college system must come from other sources, such as booster clubs and fund-raising events. The THEC's master plan called for the elimination of any state funding for athletic programs in state universities by the academic year 2007-2008 (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2002). State universities having programs operating with deficits are faced with painful cuts or finding new sources of funding for their athletic programs.

Some institutions have faced reductions in funding with improved financial management. According to Milani, Murphy, and Stripes (1993), the Georgia Institute of Technology has developed what its athletic staff calls the "Responsibility Center Approach" (p. 58) to monitor revenues and costs by aligning costs per sport with revenues to be raised or assigned. The baseball program, for example, sold billboard advertising to help defray the costs of that

program. This system emphasized the investment and costs of each sport to each responsible coach and developed the awareness of the coaches to help manage the system financially.

For many community colleges, fund-raising activities for athletic programs are a necessity. Some institutions use these activities or events to build community support and relationships. According to Cox and Harvey (1995), the use of athletic facilities for community and youth programs can create positive publicity, good will, and financial support. Booher (1990) noted that fund-raising events at community colleges sponsoring high school tournaments could also raise funds and add future public relations value (Booher).

Increased costs, reduction of funds, and the inability to operate cost-effective programs have compelled some institutions to establish controversial funding practices to save their athletic programs. Most colleges in NCAA Division I & II have increased students' fees to finance athletic programs that are the victims of reduced funding. However, according to Mangan (1994), students who are not engaged in athletics may be opposed to paying exorbitant student fees to cover the costs of these programs.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, faced with an overwhelming student vote rejecting the proposed \$75 per semester athletic fee to replace eliminated state funds, is pondering a decision to seek trustee approval. Since the THEC's five-year master plan calling for elimination of all state support for athletic programs by the 2007-2008 academic year for higher education, colleges and universities have been struggling to plan their budgets and programs (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2002). The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's athletic budget has been cut for the last three years (Biddle, 2004). It is the only member of the Southern Conference that does not require student fees for athletics.

Student fees for athletics are a funding source looked at by many colleges and universities that are prohibited from using public funds. Florida, Georgia, and Texas also prohibit the use of public funds. Students at the University of Texas at Arlington and San Antonio campuses approved student fees for athletics (Suggs, 2004). Glenville State, in West



Virginia, levied a fee on athletes: \$100 for each intercollegiate team on which they participate. Such fees are levied on top of the regular \$97 athletics fee that covers athletics facilities. According to Suggs (2003), a donor offered to cover those fees the first year. Student fees have been raised substantially at many NCAA Division I and Division II schools in order to fund athletic budgets (Mangan, 1994). At James Madison University, student fees were increased \$800 for each student. Increases for student fees amounted to 80% of the university's \$8.2 million athletic budget (Mangan, 1994). The University of California at Davis, under budget constraints, eliminated 12 of 20 teams. Students showed their support for the athletic program by voting to increase a mandatory student activity fee from \$30 to \$100 (Mangan, 1994). The increasing criticism of raising student activity fees, however, was that "Colleges depend too much on student fees" (Mangan, 1994, p. A43).

A study of the effects of expansion of athletic programs revealed a backlash from students and faculty (Selingo, 1997). Some feared a drain on academics citing those schools that did not make money. Students have protested the rise in student fees. At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a proposed increase of a \$30 annual fee to a \$100 annual fee was passed to pay for a new baseball stadium. Roughly one third of the athletic fees was used to pay down the debt on athletic facilities. Since UNC-Greensboro switched to Division I in 1991, athletic fees have risen 80% making them the highest fees for collegiate athletics in North Carolina. The UNC-Greensboro program has few other sources of income. These student fees supported 80% of their \$3.6 million budget whereas they covered approximately 50% of the budgets at other campuses in the state's system (Selingo, 1997).

Even though institutions in NCAA, Division I have seen their programs and budgets increase rapidly, some colleges in NCAA, Division III spent little and had successful teams. Williams College of Massachusetts, a school with a student body of approximately 2,000 and an endowment of \$923 million, spent \$26,000 below the conference average of \$464,000 in 1999-2000 and covered 31 varsity teams (Chen, 2000). Frugality kept costs and expenses low:

facilities were older and more used, uniforms were worn for more years, some teams traveled by vans with the coaches driving, and antiquated stands were creaky and unstable. While others in the conference have undergone multi-million dollar improvement and significant renovations, Williams has remained frugal. According to Chen, their athletic program was the most successful in the conference with the best overall performance in the NCAA, Division III.

A joint study by economists Gerking of the University of Wyoming and Rhoads of Maryland's Towson University (Gerking & Rhoads, 2000) revealed that athletic success had a short-term impact on donations by alumni. Schools with long-standing athletic traditions, however, seemed to receive higher support. These economists found that the academic quality of faculty and students were more significant factors in generating substantial gifts over the long term.

McAllister's (1998) study indicated that increased commercialization of college athletics through business enterprise sponsorship of tournaments increased the financial rewards for athletic programs. Huge sums often have been paid for sponsors to have their company's names attached to the events. The criticism in this study included the reduction of noble aims of competition into overly commercialized and profit-oriented events with no financial reward to athletes.

### *Program Cuts*

A study by the Illinois Community College Board (1994) revealed deep reform affecting accountability and productivity in college athletics. Among issues concerning the community college system of Illinois were: (a) the reduction of state funds for athletics without an increase in tuition and (b) a directive for each institution to examine its athletic programs for productivity and improvement. All programs not found to be cost-effective were to be eliminated and a directive was issued to eliminate all state funding for athletics by 1996. Seventy percent of the

institutions were reviewing their programs annually and about one half of the institutions were complying with the reforms (Illinois Community College Board).

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) eliminated its football program in 2003 after the THEC developed a master plan for higher education in Tennessee (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2002). According to Suggs (2003), THEC plans to end all financial support of state university athletic programs after the 2007-2008 academic year. The controversial elimination of football released remaining budget funds to go toward academic needs and 16 other less costly athletic teams. ETSU would have needed \$400,000 more to meet gender-equity requirements of Title IX (Suggs, 2003). According to Watson (2004), the president of ETSU refused to consider a student fee increase for athletics. Although the elimination of the football program was controversial, ETSU has no plans to eliminate athletics. There are plans to initiate a \$50 to \$80 million capital campaign for athletic facilities that would include a new basketball arena (Watson).

Some schools have been able to add programs. A report in *Sports Illustrated* ("Addition is a Plus," 1996) reviewed the actions of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, to add more intercollegiate sports by increasing programs from 8 to 29. Going against the national trend of eliminating sports programs, the university's action increased enrollment and transformed the institution from a commuter to a residential school. The costs of the program dramatically increased; however, these costs were offset by increased enrollment that helped pay for a \$17 million health and recreation center.

Cusack (1982) concluded that considerations should be given in the following areas before athletics were cut or eliminated from a college's budget:

1. Admissions benefits (because of the recruiting efforts of the athletic staff);
2. financial benefits or value to institution (because of retention rates of athletes); and
3. publicity value as it pertains to budget impact. (p. 8)

Although high standards are required of student-athletes, the president of the university makes the decisions for dropping or adding sports. At Mercyhurst University, women's softball, men's golf, and wrestling were dropped in 1982. According to the Cusack (1982) report, prime determinants in adding or dropping sports were: (a) facilities available, (b) the money that the associated student body and the district can release for the needs of the student body, and (c) programs of area high schools.

Cusack's (1982) study revealed that no policy and criteria statement was listed for adding or dropping sports programs. With the need for equity between men's and women's athletic programs, the development of such a policy and criteria was recommended (Glendale Community College, 1990). While some schools were dealing with the immediate crises of funding and cutting programs, others were calling for realistic reforms and guidelines.

### *Reforms*

In a report from the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (1991), colleges were advised to implement the "one-plus-three" guidelines to gain presidential control, academic integrity, financial control, and certification of their athletic programs. The certification called for independent authentication of each institution's athletic program by an outside body. While the study by the Commission concerned the members of the NCAA and recommended reform of members' athletic programs, the effect and implications have been felt by all areas of collegiate athletics including the junior and community college systems.

Throughout the report by the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (1991), presidential control was recommended for oversight of all financial matters in athletic departments. Although the original intent was to eliminate abuses in NCAA collegiate athletics, the trickle-down effect of this philosophy spurred some community college presidents to eliminate programs outright with no cost-effective study or justification. With periodic attempts at reform and criticism that reforms had failed in big-time collegiate programs, the frequent

reform being called for, according to Sperber (1990), was elimination of state funding or outright elimination of athletic programs. Many administrators found themselves torn in their decisions to eliminate their athletic programs (Mangan, 1996).

Sperber (1990) found collegiate attempts at athletic program reforms to be a disheartening pattern of failure. In the 1970s and 1980s, some were urging elimination of athletic scholarships and proposing a shift to need-based grants.

Following a survey and study by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), recommendations were made that would impact both the AACJC and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) (McAninch, 1987). The AACJC and NJCAA agreed to work jointly to obtain greater CEO involvement in the formation and oversight of policies related to intercollegiate athletics.

Additionally, the policy statement of the AACJC recommended oversight and actions to develop athletic eligibility standards, progress toward degrees, and the discretion for colleges to adopt more stringent standards to the NJCAA rules provided (American Association of Community & Junior Colleges, 1989).

A survey of CEOs from 969 two-year colleges was conducted to determine their involvement in intercollegiate athletics including membership in the NJCAA (McAninch, 1987). Analysis of the results from 5% of those surveyed indicated moderate to great involvement in athletics. The survey taken was related to academic standards, eligibility, greater CEO oversight, and monitoring of part-time student athletes (McAninch). Since that time, a new rule instituted by the NJCAA stipulated that student-athletes must be full-time students (National Junior College Athletic Association, 2000).

Among others calling for reforms, Brand (2003), former president of Indiana University and the president of the NCAA, pointed to two models of athletics: the professional sports model and the collegiate model. While valuing athletics as an enhancement in the collegiate setting, Brand reported that too many colleges and universities had swung too far toward the professional

sports model operating as a separate entity from the academic institution. According to Brand, the professional model is based on profit: professional athletes get paid for their careers and make profits for their employer. The collegiate model is based on education and student athletes participate in athletics while acquiring an education. Brand stated that collegiate athletics have brought value to higher education. According to Brand, the closer the collegiate model gets to the professional model, the more it “detracts from the value of college sports” (n. p.).

### *Impact of Athletic Programs*

A study by Tucker (1992) indicated that a successful big-time football program enhanced the academic mission of one institution through advertising that attracted higher-quality students. The downside correlation was a decrease in the graduation rate. There was no correlation of highly successful basketball programs to graduation rates. A conclusion drawn on the variation for graduation rates was that many more students attended football games than attended basketball games. Additional time, activities, and weekends affected student life and study time more than basketball (Tucker).

A study by Caudill and Long (1991) focusing on the impact participation in intercollegiate athletics had on the income and graduation of student-athletes revealed incomes estimated to be 4% higher than incomes of non-athletes in similar 28 to 30 age brackets. The models used to estimate income and graduation determinants suggested that athletic participation might enhance qualities that encourage success: discipline, motivation, a competitive spirit, confidence, and other subjective traits. The data were based on athletes who participated in the 1970s at smaller colleges and universities (Caudill & Long).

Although evidence was not conclusive, researchers conducting a study of the relationship of extracurricular activities in the education attainment process (Eckland & Hanks, 1976) suggested that extracurricular programs were supportive rather than detrimental to the institution’s primary goals and formal standards for education. Both the high school and the

college status attainment models were used to determine the role of participation in athletics and other social or extracurricular activities. The researchers concluded, “Athletics has no effect on cumulative grade averages or values, but has a positive effect on educational attainment” (p. 280). The researchers further stated that athletics stimulated students to stay in college and even go on to graduate school (Eckland & Hanks).

A study of the effects of resurrection of a football team at a private, predominantly Black-attended college revealed several positive benefits. Benedict College, established in 1871 in Columbia, South Carolina, ended its football program in 1966 during the height of its program because of financial difficulties. The college also could not afford the cost to repair the stadium being placed in the athletic department budget when it should have been placed in capital improvements. Fears that the school would not receive accreditation caused the board to drop the program. After the resurrection of the program in 1996, enrollment increased, alumni giving and support increased, the community became excited and supportive, and the college experienced general contributions for academics from alumni and corporations (Hamilton & Lofton, 1996).

A study by Lords (2000) addressed the effects on Virginia Tech University after a highly successful football season in 1999. An advertising effect of 18 million households watching the Sugar Bowl Game for the national title appeared to have had some influence on the following: (a) a record \$14 million in revenues from ticket sales, (b) Sugar Bowl appearance, (c) payouts for televised conference games, and (d) \$1.25 million profit for the athletics department. After bills and contract commitments were met, further statistical results of the winning football program were (a) a \$200,000 gift to endow a professorship in Black studies in 1995-96, (b) a \$250,000 gift to the university library, (c) sizable bumps in applications for early admission, and (d) a predicted increase in applicant pool by 20%. The positive benefits were closely related to the bumps experienced by Northwestern University in 1995-96 after its Rose Bowl appearance in 1995. Levels of earnings from apparel, paraphernalia, and sales grew 10 times over the previous

year, and student applications increased by 21% the following year. Even though apparel sales later dropped to less than half, admission applications have remained steady. Critics of big-time sports considered the benefits of a highly successful program were high in the short-term, but, no long-term positive results were identified. The conclusions expressed by critics were that unsuccessful program years and the number of adverse publicity of scandals involving athletes gave a negative impact. Lords found that a scandal involving athletes at Northwestern in 1998 had no impact on admissions or donations by alumni. However, negative publicity of Virginia Polytechnic and State University athletes involved in a scandal in 1995-96 did appear to affect negatively the number of applications the following year. After the university established policies to deal with athletes by expulsion and loss of scholarships for those who plead guilty to felony crimes, the athletics program has not suffered from such scandals (Lords).

This admission statistic remains high even though student fees comprise about \$6 million of the athletic department's approximate \$20 million budget. The state of Virginia, by law, does not subsidize athletic departments at Virginia Polytechnic and State University or any other public university. Although the athletic department was not obligated to share with the rest of the university, it did make monetary gifts to other departments while generating side benefits of higher admissions, free publicity, donations, and more visitors to the campus (Lords, 2000).

McCormick and Tinsley (1987) used a model of SAT scores of freshmen to measure the impact athletics might have had on reading scores. Their interpretation of the data indicated that colleges that participated in major college athletics had undergraduate student bodies with higher academic qualities than colleges that did not. The researchers concluded that evidence indicated a symbiotic relation between athletics and academic standards. Elimination of athletics by schools not highly endowed could have a detrimental effect on academics and enrollment, deleting the low cost of advertising and higher enrollments resulting from successful athletic programs.



More evidence that starting football programs helped increase enrollment, donations, and more enthusiasm was detailed in a report by Sidey (1990) of new athletic programs being established in Christian colleges.

Data related to the highly successful football program of Kansas State University revealed great increases in applications, donations, attendance of games, bowl game revenue, and television contracts since winning seasons in 1989. The revenues covered expenses for years afterward and the fortunes of the university arose in other areas including fundraising, a \$30-million library renovation, a \$7-million art museum, and an all-time high enrollment of 21,543 in 1996. Annual giving rose from \$12.7 million in 1989 to \$35 million in the first six months of 1999. The Kansas State Foundation tripled its assets to \$232 million since 1989 (Suggs, 1999).

In contrast to benefits of a winning program, Oklahoma State, with the departure of legendary coach Barry Switzer, saw its benefits related to its athletic success remain steady or even increase: enrollment rose to a 20-year high, academic quality rose with students and professors, and fundraising soared from \$21.4 million in 1988-89 to \$62.3 million in 1998-99. The conclusion of some officials indicated no relationship of financial benefits to football programs. The stock market growth and prosperous economy at the time was credited for benefits at colleges all across the country. Oklahoma's athletic department has had repeated revenue shortfalls and had to borrow from the university. The only advantage of a big-time athletic program, according to some, was image-building (Suggs, 1999).

Gerking and Rhoads (2000) concluded from analysis of data that year-to-year athletic success influenced voluntary contributions to universities in support of education. Contributions might lead or lag athletic success. Long-standing athletic traditions or success had a positive impact on voluntary support and both total and alumni contributions. Increased contributions impacted positively the year following participation in a football tournament. The costs of building or maintaining a quality athletic program might be less than the resources required to increase academic programs. Additionally, positive impact and payoff came more quickly from

athletic traditions because of the positive publicity and images that athletic successes provided (Gerking & Rhoads).

A study by Baade and Sundberg (1996) focused on the correlation between successful football and basketball programs and alumni giving. Their findings were: (a) a statistically significant correlation between success in football and alumni giving but a small overall effect; (b) in recent years, successful basketball programs have had a greater impact on alumni giving at liberal arts colleges; and (c) four appearances in basketball tournaments had significant correlation for alumni giving at four universities. General correlations indicated that extremely successful programs equated to alumni giving. Spending money to build a sports program, however, can mean reduced alumni giving if academic quality is sacrificed or neglected (Baade & Sundberg).

Etzel and Gaski (1984) in a study to define the relationship of athletic success to alumni generosity found no positive impact on monetary contributions. Their data were collected from 99 universities that included most major NCAA, Division IA colleges involved in basketball and football athletic programs. Although the researchers found no positive relationship between collegiate athletic performance and monetary contributions received, they did admit that successful football and athletic programs possibly did have a positive impact on fundraising as a cumulative effect. A successful athletic program conducted over a number of years could enhance a school's image. That phenomenon, according to the authors, would not be captured by the one- or two-year lagging of independent variables used in the study. Further study was suggested to ascertain a consistent long-term cumulative effect (Etzel & Gaski).

A presentation by Stier (1988) recommended that athletic administrators understand the unique characteristics of their programs, work more closely with administrators of the school to develop a global athletic marketing plan (compatible with institution missions), and determine avenues for growth. Examples of successful athletic fund-raising events and activities resulted in

an addition of potential and responsive donors with an effect of expanding fund-raising goals for the entire institution.

### *Impact of Community College Athletic Programs*

A report by Selingo (1998) on the start of a new athletic program at a fast-growing community college in Southern Nevada focused on the results of a 3-month study by a 24-member committee. The committee's recommendation was to begin a modest athletics program at the 31,000-student institution that was the fastest-growing community college in the country. One of the major reasons the community wanted an athletic program was to give local athletes a place to continue with their sports while getting an education. While state funds were being considered, the college was also looking to other areas for funding. Along with student-support service funds and fees, some faculty and students wanted other priorities funded (Selingo, 1998).

Rybak's (1994) study revealed the economic impact of an athletic program at a public rural community college on its local community. The economic impact of the athletic program of ICC on the community of Grand Rapids was \$2,095,537. Out of 115, one hundred four athletes said they would not have attended ICC if athletics were not offered.

Rybak's (1994) research at Miami-Dade Community College showed that in order for a college to have a maximum economic impact, funding should flow into the college from outside its service area, while its employees resided within the service area. The results of this research indicated that local economies received direct and significant impact with the recruitment of student/athletes from outside the immediate area. The combination of new monies and local employee spending produced the greatest economic impact. For every dollar the college spent, \$16 was returned to the community in economic impact. The athletic program was found to be an important determinant in the recruitment of students. The 104 student-athletes outside the service area translated into \$562,744 in lost tuition and state aid. The loss of revenues from the 104 students would represent 57% of the non-salary budget; \$982,395 of the college (Rybak).

Rybak (1994) recommended a need for statewide community college economic impact studies of the colleges and athletics. He also recommended a need for random selected studies of community colleges for economic studies of athletics nationally. Results would prove to be a valuable aid in making future decisions. When a 14-member group of retired college presidents recommended cost-cutting measures, 20 specific sport programs were dropped by Minnesota Community Colleges (Rybak).

Results of a study by McCullough (2000) revealed a significant positive economic impact on the community with the recruitment of student-athletes outside the immediate area. Further results indicated the loss of revenues from student-athletes who come from outside the service area would represent over \$400,000 in lost tuition and state aid. The loss of revenue would impact a number of teaching positions, purchase of equipment and supplies, and have potential for other negative consequences, according to the results of this study. McCullough's review of literature indicated few studies have been done to determine the economic impact of athletic programs upon the community college.

A study by Perry and Raeppe (1980) reported that most college administrators insisted that intercollegiate athletic programs could be justified only if they contributed to the educational missions of the institutions. Athletic importance varied with officials and students at each campus. With rapid changes in junior and community colleges and the transition to growth or enrollment of older age students, the changing rules and oversight of athletics has created a more urgent need for athletic programs to justify their existence as part of the 2-year institution mission.

In an ethnographic interview study of a homogeneous group of White female athletes at a large community college with an enrollment of more than 30,000 students, data analysis revealed a dominant perception that participation in intercollegiate athletics motivated academic success, retention, and satisfaction with the institution (Berson, 1996). According to Berson, Broward Community College, one of 28 two-year public community colleges coordinated by the Florida

Community Colleges and Workforce Development, provided opportunities for athletes to develop academic, interpersonal, and life skills. Among special services offered were specialized orientations, one-on-one mentoring by coaches, mandatory study halls, and intensive 3-day retreats that focused on improvement in academic performance and problem-solving skills. Additionally, tutoring, homework assistance, and group advisement were provided. Berson found that the personal attention and concern given by the coach made a difference in success in academic goals and staying in school. General impressions from the study were that current athletes attributed their remaining in college to the following: (a) membership on the team, (b) requirement for minimum GPA, (c) recruitment for full-time attendance, (d) mandatory study hall, (e) monitoring of progress reports, (f) tutoring, and (g) the group support of team and coach. Several members gave the credit for remaining in school to other participants on the team. According to Berson, the study confirmed findings from earlier retention studies that the stronger the relationship between the student and the institution, the greater the attainment of programs. Maintaining academic performance and success, as suggested by Berson's study, could be accomplished with participation in intercollegiate athletics. Berson further suggested a need for additional study to determine the number of athletes who were accepted by upper-division universities and the number who received tuition scholarships at those upper-division institutions.

An analysis of the athletic program review of Glendale Community College in Glendale, California, revealed measures initiated at the college to monitor the athletic programs for quality of standards, adherence to the institution's academic mission, adherence to governing rules, and regulations of athletic oversight and governing bodies as well as to provide positive, healthful, enjoyable athletic experiences for each student-athlete (Glendale Community College, 1990). Efforts were made by the institution to monitor and validate enrollment, units passed, GPA, and transcript verification. Policies of the institution encouraged development of positive and supportive relationships of coaches with their teams. High standards for campus life, good

citizenship, decorum, academic success, and team excellence were expected of student athletes. While high standards were asked from student-athletes, the decisions for dropping or adding sports were made by the president of the university. Women's softball and men's golf and wrestling were dropped in 1982. According to the Glendale Community College review, prime determinants in adding or dropping sports were: (a) facilities available, (b) the money that the associated student body and the district could provide, (c) the needs of the student body, and (d) programs of area high schools. No policy and criteria statement was listed for adding or dropping sports programs; however, the development of such a policy and criteria was recommended (Glendale Community College).

#### *Impact of Athletic Programs in the Tennessee Board of Regents Community Colleges*

Studies have not been found for data revealing the impact of athletic programs of member institutions in the TBR Community College System. Austere and critical deficits in the state budget and repeated drastic cuts in appropriations from the state of Tennessee to higher education have forced THEC to commit to a plan of action that focuses on cost containment. Recognizing the important role athletics play in the student experience, the commission included athletics in its plan of action and cost containment. At the heart of cost containment is control of the use of general fund support for athletics (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2002).

#### *Summary*

In 1980, more than one third of all students attending institutions of higher education were enrolled in 2-year community or junior colleges. Since that time, the numbers have increased with subsequent establishment of athletic programs to include women and a variety of sports. The NJCAA, established in 1938, has provided the umbrella and the oversight for athletic programs, rules, and standards (NCAA, 2005).

While many recognize the value and benefits of intercollegiate athletics for the students, the institutions, and the communities they serve, others call for outright elimination, scaling back, or making such programs self-supporting. Evolving over the past 150 years, intercollegiate athletic programs have had a huge impact on the students and the communities they serve. The current state of athletic programs in higher education and the budget crises facing state governments and their taxpayers are compelling the detailed analysis of those programs. The search for reforms and solutions is continuing.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### *Rationale for Qualitative Research*

The purpose of a phenomenological qualitative study, as stated by Creswell (1998), is to “describe the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (p. 23). The phenomenon in this study was the perceptions of several groups of individuals pertaining to the impact of athletic programs at their respective institutions.

Eight reasons given by Creswell (1998) stating why qualitative research should be used in a particular study included the following: (a) to determine how or what, (b) to develop exploration theories, (c) to achieve a detailed view of the topic, (d) to study individuals in their natural settings, (e) to write in literary style, (f) to have sufficient time and resources for extensive data collection, (g) to have receptive audiences, and (h) to use the researcher’s role as an active learner in telling the story from another person’s viewpoint.

The major procedural issues that guided me in this study were:

1. Preconceived ideas or judgments were suspended until the voices of the participants were heard, recorded, and verified by the participants’ approval.
2. Research questions were developed to ask the participants to describe their everyday experiences and the meaning of those experiences in their lives.
3. The long interview was the primary method used to collect data. McCracken (1988) described the long interview as a method to “take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world,” and “[to] give us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves” (p. 35).
4. Data were analyzed categorizing common statements and shared meanings.



### *Development of Interview Guide*

Each of the interview guides was unique in that each represented questions specifically targeted for each particular group of people: presidents, athletic directors, coaches, and student-athletes. The interview guides (see Appendices B-E) included a heading for the purpose of recording basic information such as date and place of interview and the name of the interview participant. The heading also served as a reminder of the purpose of the study before the questioning and discussion began. The interview guides included guiding questions asked to each participant group. Space was provided for taking notes as interviewees responded. The questions followed Gall, Borg, and Gall's (1996) description of a semistructured interview. This procedure is one in which "The interviewer asks a series of structured questions and then probes more deeply with open-minded questions to obtain additional information" (p. 769). Although Gall et al. described this as a quantitative interviewing method, it was also suitable for this particular study. This technique allowed the researcher to seek clarification or elaboration of answers given during the interview sessions. The questions included in the interview guide were developed as a result of an awareness of the issues facing our state system and the researcher's personal experience with this topic.

### *Interview Protocol*

The president of each of the two institutions represented in this study was sent a letter explaining the research and process of the study (see Appendix F). A follow-up phone call was made to the secretary of each president to confirm a date and time for the interview. The interview guide was mailed to each president prior to the interview date for his or her familiarity of the questions and to give him or her some time to reflect on responses. The presidents were asked to assist in facilitating the interviews for the two athletic directors, four coaches, and eight student-athletes by informing them of what the study was about and how the interviews would be conducted. The athletic directors were called to arrange dates and times for interviewing with

them and their coaches and student-athletes. Each participant received an interview guide prior to the interview date. As previously mentioned, each of the four sets of questions was framed in such a way as to address the specific issues of the participant being interviewed at the time.

Each interview was audio-taped. After the interview, each tape was transcribed in order to preserve the data. A copy of the transcription was sent to each interviewed participant to allow him or her to check for accuracy and to add any additional comments that were needed to clarify understanding. The interviewed participant was given the opportunity to return the transcription to the researcher with any additional notes or comments that he or she wished to correct or add (see Appendix H).

Data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using index cards. Statements and quotes were transcribed to the index cards. Differences and similarities were then transferred to other cards for further analysis.

### *Pilot Study*

A pilot study was conducted at one of the community colleges in the TBR system to help determine the final interview protocol. The participants were the president, the athletic director, two coaches, and five student-athletes (one from each sport). Interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed with appropriate adjustments made to the questions.

### *Participants*

This study comprised 16 participants with each participant being given a pseudonym in order to ensure anonymity. The participants included the presidents from two institutions, the athletic director from two institutions, two coaches from two institutions, and four student-athletes from two institutions. The student-athletes represented each of four sports at each school.

The face-to-face interviews were conducted on the campus of the participants involved in the study. All interviews were conducted in confidential settings.

### *Data Collection and Data Analysis*

Data were coded and analyzed in a systematic and verifiable way as suggested by Krueger (1998). Each set of questions for each group was asked in the same sequence. Notes were taken during all interviews and interviews were audio-tape recorded. Transcripts were made immediately following the interviews. Index cards were used to record common themes or statements.

All data collected were retained to provide verification of the analysis. This included jottings and field notes, transcripts, and other applicable materials. A study must be verifiable in order to be regarded as trustworthy.

### *Trustworthiness*

The researcher used a number of methods to ensure trustworthiness in this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) addressed many categories that have been identified in this study. The strategies used to address the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were taken from the procedures described by Creswell (1998). Some of the techniques used included member checking and using a peer debriefer and an inquiry auditor.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is the most important procedure for establishing credibility in a qualitative study. The participants in this study had an opportunity to provide feedback and verify accuracy and interpretations from the researcher by reviewing collected data, interview transcripts, and final reports of the researcher's findings.

A peer debriefer (see Appendix J) provided an external check for the research process. This external check ensured the dependability of the study. This individual enabled the

researcher to stay on target by asking difficult questions about various aspects of the study such as the methods, meanings, and interpretations.

An inquiry auditor (see Appendix I) was used to examine the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations in order to support confirmability and dependability.

### *Summary*

Qualitative methods were used in this study to analyze the perceptions of those individuals who impacted or who were impacted by community college athletics. Interview guides for each interview group were created to provide a general direction for the course of the interview but follow-up questions might have been added as well. All interviews were audio-taped followed by transcription by the researcher. The collected data were analyzed using index cards to identify common themes within each group. Trustworthiness for the study was established by using member checking, a peer debriefer, and an inquiry auditor. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data and Chapter 5 presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from this qualitative research study.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### *Introduction*

This study was made to determine the impact of athletic programs in the community colleges of the Tennessee Board of Regents System. The focus of the study was to learn how the people who plan, oversee, administer, and participate every day in those athletic programs perceive the effects on their lives, their academic and career goals, their educational opportunities, and the mission and goals of the institutions.

Of the 13 community colleges in the TBR system, 10 have athletic programs that include a variety of sports. This study was limited to two institutions in the TBR system: Institution A and Institution B. There were 16 participants in the study who were given the following pseudonyms to protect their identities: AP and BP (two presidents), AAD and BAD (two athletic directors), AC1, AC2, BC1, and BC2 (four coaches representing two sports from each institution), and ASA1, ASA2, ASA3, ASA4, BSA1, BSA2, BSA3, and BSA4 (eight student-athletes representing four similar sports from each institution). The names of individuals or institutions identified in the transcripts were changed to the appropriate pronouns or generic names to protect the identities of individuals and institutions participating in this study.

#### *Perceptions of Beneficial Areas of Impact*

When participants were asked various questions to determine their perceptions of the impact of athletic programs on their institution and the student-athletes' success, they replied with positive and negative aspects of the programs. Many areas of impact cited benefits for the institution and the student-athletes as well as challenges for the institution and the student-athletes.

## *Mission*

When asked the purpose of having athletic programs at their institutions, both presidents cited the fulfillment of the mission and goals of their institutions. President AP stated that the athletic program is just like every other program of the institution in that it gives opportunities to a segment of students to pursue their interests and career goals. He explained:

It is part of our mission for student development. It gives students opportunities to develop leadership and some sense of civic responsibility. The college's goals, which support our mission, challenge our intercollegiate athletic program to reach high levels of excellence in teaching and service similar to other programs throughout the college. Our mission commits us to provide programs to enhance student development, opportunities, and achievements. Within those commitments are the services and activities to assist them in their development and general welfare. Our athletic program is deemed essential as we profess to be a comprehensive community college.

President BP stated that it enabled the college to recruit students from within the community and outside the community who otherwise would not come. He referred to several purposes of having an athletic program, such as the following:

I do not think you can have a complete college without recognizing sports and the role they play in American society and American higher education. They build the character of the college and provide a focus for the college in terms of extracurricular activities. Athletics fulfill major commitments of our mission statement to educate the whole person, to develop teamwork and leaders, and to contribute to the personal health and well-being of our students.

The athletic directors of both institutions stated that the missions of the athletic programs were interwoven with the academic missions of their institutions. Their athletic programs did not operate as separate programs from the academic mission of their institutions. Athletic Director BAD said he felt that community college athletic programs could provide opportunities to a group of student-athletes who might not have such opportunities at Division I and II colleges as freshmen. He added, "I think it provides education for a group of people who might not be able to have an education."

The coaches offered a variety of ways that athletic programs impact the mission of the institution. Coach AC1, while noting that a lot of the students would not be enrolled if they were not playing a sport, observed:

Our program goes hand in hand with the mission and goals of the college. You know you are here trying to help students get a college education, and I think that is what we do. Our kids are basketball players, in my case, but they are trying to get a college education. Basketball is a vehicle that helps some kids stay in school just like art, music, or whatever may be the case. I just think that the things that we do with our program just fall in line with everything at the school that we have to do.

Coach BC1 said he saw the impact of the athletic programs on the mission of the institution in this way:

You are trying to bring quality kids in here to support the mission of the college, which is to further the education for those guys, to build character, and demonstrate good values. I think to be productive out in the community, athletics certainly has a role in that. If done well and opportunities are provided for them, I think it is intertwined with the mission statement, whether it is overtly said or it is just inherently in there. It is very much in there. I feel it is important for me to bring guys in that I think are going to further the goals of the college, as well as the goals of the program, and not just to serve one at the expense of the others.

### *Enrollment*

When asked why they chose to attend their particular community colleges, all of the student-athletes interviewed stated that they made the choice because they wanted to participate in athletics. Six of the eight student-athletes stated their desire to continue with athletics when they transferred to 4-year institutions with two of those hoping to continue as professionals. The two remaining student-athletes did not have plans to participate as athletes when they transferred to 4-year institutions, citing a desire to concentrate on their career goals. One of these two was pursuing a career as a kindergarten- through fifth-grade public school teacher and said it was “tough to play sports and keep up with school.” The other player, who was planning to pursue a degree in business and obtain a job in pharmaceutical sales, cited the stressful demands of both playing sports and keeping up with academic work.

Both President AP and President BP cited a desire to continue with athletics past high school as the basis for the enrollment of approximately 100 students who would not have come otherwise. President AP explained, saying, "Our athletic program attracts between 80-100 students who in all probability would not be attending college if the athletic program was not available for them."

President BP indicated that there was a great impact on enrollment because of the influence student-athletes had on their girlfriends, friends, and peers. He stated that there was a secondary impact of those friends and peers following an athlete to the same community college. He stated that an internal review showed the influence of that secondary impact to raise the enrollment to even greater numbers.

Athletic Directors AAD and BAD cited the positive impact on enrollment that amounted to 75-100 students who would not come except for athletics. BAD stated that the community college athletics programs allowed more than a just a select few to participate in collegiate athletics. According to BAD, many of those, motivated by sports, had the opportunities to obtain 2 more years of education, a technical certificate, or additional education at 4-year institutions. Otherwise, most of them would not have entered college.

The coaches gave varied reasons for the impact of athletic programs on their institutions, and one admitted, "We would lose 100 students without it." Coach AC1 stated that the budgets for the community college athletic programs were frugal and much-needed funds raised from private donations and activities supported the programs. He then compared the community college's programs to Division I programs:

We do not have huge budgets like you see down here in Division I programs, and you do not see those kinds of scholarships given to kids either. A lot of these kids would not be here if they were not playing the sport. I think the college makes money off the students that come to this college and the community colleges around, because a lot of these kids would not be here if they were not playing the sport. I am not sure that they would be in school.



Coach AC1 reported that head count (FTE) money that the college receives from the state for these students was not spent totally on the athletic department. He said he felt those funds were used in other areas of the institution.

### *Educational and Athletic Opportunities*

When asked why they chose to attend their particular community colleges, all of the student-athletes interviewed stated that they made the choice because they wanted to participate in athletics. Six of the eight student-athletes desired to continue with athletics when they transferred to 4-year institutions, with two of those hoping to continue in their sports as professionals. The two remaining student-athletes did not have plans to participate as athletes when they transfer to 4-year institutions, choosing to concentrate more on their chosen career paths. Although sophomore student-athlete ASA1 stated that being an athlete made the college experience more fun and realized that 4-year schools were recruiting, his future plans were to concentrate on a public school teaching career. Sophomore student-athlete ASA2, who chose the community college in order to participate in sports, did not plan to participate in sports after transferring to a 4-year institution, but planned to focus on a business degree and on obtaining a job in pharmaceutical sales.

All of the student-athletes based their decisions to enroll in a community college primarily for the opportunity to continue to participate in athletics, stating that they probably would not have gone to the community college if not for athletics. Most were motivated by the desire to continue with the sports they loved and desired to play at 4-year institutions. One student-athlete pointed out that by playing at a community college he would have more playing time, not be sitting on the bench for 2 years, develop into a better athlete, and have better opportunities at a 4-year institution. He also had the dream of playing on a professional baseball team after college.

Students stated their individual reasons for coming to the community colleges:

Student ASA1 was recruited by the coach and came to participate in athletics. Another reason this student gave was the security of being with teammates while away at college.

Student ASA2 came to participate in athletics with work study assistance but did not receive a scholarship. He said another deciding factor was that the college was close to home.

Student ASA3 came to participate in athletics because the particular athletic program had a good reputation in the state. Additionally, he mentioned that the chance to win a national championship was an important factor.

Student ASA4 came to participate in athletics because he heard that the college had a reputation for a winning program and a successful specialty program that related to his chosen future career.

Student BSA1 was recruited and came to participate in athletics. This student said he liked the coaches, loved the sport, met so many people, and considered that all those experiences had been really good.

Student BSA2 came to his college to participate in sports and he also wanted to be closer to home. The student acknowledged he liked the coach and added that the college was a good place to be.

Student BSA3, a local student, wanted to play ball and came because participating in that sport was just something he liked to do.

Student-athlete BSA4 came to play basketball because he said he liked the coaches and just loved the game. He stated that God gave him a gift for basketball.

All of the student-athletes who participated in this study were not entering college for the first time. Some of the students were transfers from other community colleges or 4-year institutions. They cited a variety of reasons for the transfers. Similar to other students who did not participate in athletics and transferred to the community colleges because of insufficient grades or personal difficulties, two of the participants interviewed said they needed to bring up

their GPA's. Two of the participants wanted to be closer to home. Another spoke of going to the community college because his friends were going there.

### *Career Paths and Goals*

Of the eight student-athletes interviewed, the following career goals were expressed: kindergarten- through fifth-grade public school teacher; business or pharmaceutical sales; college coach; to major in biology and become an FBI Agent; medical school or wildlife/plant biology; undecided (possibly physical therapy, teaching/coaching); to play professional sports or college coach; and to teach third, fourth, and fifth grades.

Student-athletes who participated in this study were influenced in their career choices by their experiences and their heroes.

Student athlete BSA4, who transferred from another community college because he wanted to play for a coach who took a job there, planned to be a public school teacher. He said that one of his heroes was his sixth-grade teacher who developed a bond with him and made an impression on him with how she worked with the other students. He wanted to be like her. He also cited his mother who was not able to have an education or the career she wanted. He reflected:

I think, without her, I would not be where I am today. She is always the one that says: "You need to go to college, and you got to make the grades. If you do not, you will not be anything in life." She basically just lays it out on the table for me, and I have to pick it up.

Student athlete ASA1, a female sophomore participant, who had plans to transfer to the University of Tennessee's 5-year program for a master's degree and become a kindergarten-through fifth-grade public school teacher, admired her dad who was a coach, a high school teacher, and who had his master's degree. She spoke of his guidance in helping to put her on the right path.

Student athlete ASA2, a sophomore, who was ready to graduate and planned to transfer to a 4-year college to major in business, said he admired his dad and a high school friend's dad who had business and sales careers.

Student athlete ASA3, who had signed to play at a 4-year college the next year, credited his future head coach and the coaches who had conducted summer camps while he was a high school athlete. He said he hoped to have a professional career in baseball but was concentrating on a business degree and coaching.

Student athlete ASA4, a sophomore athlete, who had received the most outstanding student-athlete award in high school, cited the work her dad did in training scuba divers in nighttime search and recovery. Influenced by those divers, the policemen her dad knew, and the television program *CSI*, she said she hoped to eventually obtain a job with the FBI. This student-athlete, holding a GPA of 3.4 and getting a degree in the criminal justice program, planned to raise her GPA and transfer to a 4-year college to study biology.

Student athlete BSA1, one of the students who had transferred from a 4-year college, talked about being impressed by a doctor who offered to give a tour in the summer to observe a day of his work. After completing some college classes in high school, transferring from a 4-year college to be closer to home, and taking microbiology in summer school, this student hoped to be a senior the following year at another 4-year college and to major in biology. In addition, a local doctor had some influence in helping the student to consider a medical career.

Student athlete BSA2, who had transferred because of an insufficient GPA, wanted another chance to participate in sports, to be closer to home, and to concentrate more on academics. The student was not sure of future plans but was considering physical therapy or coaching. After 1 and 1/2 years at the previous college, and a year and a summer session at the community college, this student's plans were to graduate and transfer to a 4-year college. The student did not cite any heroes or role models.

Student athlete BSA3, who stated that he wanted to get into pro ball, was working toward a career in sports management or coaching. He wanted to be involved in sports in some way, citing some of his coaches as people he admired. After transferring from a 4-year college, he hoped to get more playing time, not sit on the bench, to mature as a player, and have opportunities to play at a 4-year college.

### *Budgets*

When asked if their athletic programs were a financial burden on the budgetary operations of their institutions, both presidents stated that their institutions would lose money if they did not have athletic programs. Both cited the residual effect of other students coming because of the influence of athletics. President AP stated that because the athletic programs were funded primarily by out of student fee allocations and private funds, athletic programs were an enhancement rather than a burden. He spoke of setting priorities:

You take what money you have and set your institutional priorities. You fund those priorities to the extent that you can while at the same time striving to ensure quality. It is a balancing act. You have got to really manage your appropriation in the budget. I am sure that every program, including athletics, is funded--if you are going to have quality. Now, I do not think it is a burden (because) from the standpoint that if you did not have it, you would lose money or 100 students plus the residual effect of other students coming here.

President BP stated that if the strict costs of the programs were only measured against the income that came from tuition, the costs were breakeven. He said that the institution gains, however, when the secondary effect of other students coming brings more into the budget. He estimated that the institution realized as much as \$250,000 to \$300,000 on the plus side.

The athletic directors noted that the community college athletic programs were very frugal. Director BAD acknowledged:

We do a whale of a job with the limited money that we get. I have gone down to the local sports organization, and when I tell them that we run five cost centers on \$150,000, they are baffled. With community college athletics and the little money that it receives, it is a great bargain for the state, and it is a bargain for the community. We bring in

different people from out of state, as well as in state, and allow them to mix together. I think it helps overall in economics in the long run.

When asked what effect the athletic programs had on the college's budgetary operations, BAD spoke of the strict adherence to TBR guidelines on funds spent on athletics, reduction of out of state tuition performance waivers for athletes, and the use of coaches for duties besides coaching. He noted:

Our coaches, who are full-time, not only coach but they also teach, or they are part of the recruiting department where they go out and have to recruit in high schools. But, by and large, most of them teach. Personally, I do not think it creates that much of a hardship (on the budget). I think the bang for your buck is far superior to what is maybe even realized. So, I do not think it has that much of a drain on the budget operations at all.

Director AAD noted that when you looked at the enrollment impact of athletics and considered how that enrollment factored into THEC funding formula, it was close to being a wash. He said he did not think the athletic program affected the college budgetary operations in a negative way.

### *Motivation*

Presidents from both colleges expressed that athletic programs attracted a specific group of students to the community colleges. Sports are a big part of American life, and many high school graduates want to continue with athletics if they can.

President AP stated his belief that the appetite for athletics is very reflective of American society. He observed:

When you watch the news, what do you see? You see sports, weather, and news. So, given the fact that a college should be, to a great extent, an extension of our society and its values, I think athletics is very appropriate.

He said he thought that athletics was a major factor in some students' decisions to go to college. Without athletics, a lot of students would not go to school--or college. He also commented that some of the community college athletes performed as well as those at universities and yet they were not given as much--such as training tables and places to live. He

added that the community college programs provided educational opportunities for athletes while giving those athletes more opportunities to develop, grow, and learn.

President BP maintained that athletics was not only a great motivator in getting students into school but also gave many young people opportunities to continue their athletic interests while getting an education. He continued by saying, “Every means used--clubs, organizations, and everything that goes beyond courses--that can hold and motivate students to get an education is worthwhile.” He said he considered those students were the ones motivated to maintain grades, graduate, or go on to 4-year degrees. He offered this reflection:

There are people out there with degrees mainly because they were on athletic teams in college. Athletics gave them opportunities to go further. I cannot think of anything that cuts across students with different majors that has such a positive impact on students than athletics.

Both presidents cited feedback from former student-athletes and their parents on the positive impact and significance of participating in athletics while obtaining further education at the community colleges.

Athletic directors acknowledged that the educational opportunities provided for student-athletes would probably not be attainable were it not for athletic programs in the community colleges. Athletic Director BAD reflected on the benefits he anticipated for student-athletes:

Looking at it from a sports point of view, I hope for increased ability in the area of fundamentals and understanding of what it takes to be involved with college athletics, so they can move on to the next level. I would like them to achieve the number of hours that they are capable of achieving to either get to a Division I, Division II, or NAI level, so that they can continue their education. If they are on the tech side of campus, we want them to leave with a trade. We want them to leave with a foundation that allows them to make an impact in society when they get out of sports.

The director reflected further, saying:

Ideally, I would like for them to develop a realistic idea of what they are all about in terms of their talent and sports, which is never as good as they think. You see that all the time. I would like for them to develop a sense of family and a sense of community amongst the athletic department. I would like for them to understand etiquette in society. I would like for them to know that their earning power is being increased because they are going further with their education than if they had stopped at a high school level.

Without athletic programs, Athletic Director BAD stated that society would be hurt economically, theologically, and culturally in the long run. He pointed out that the community college athletic programs provided opportunities for students who come from a variety of socioeconomic and diverse backgrounds, and allowed them to continue to excel in sports. He cited what he considered a real success story concerning an athlete who dreamed of playing at a Division I college:

He came here to vocational tech, and we put him in welding. He was here and played 2 years. He will come back from time to time, making maybe 20 to 30 bucks an hour. To me, that is a success story. He comes back with a big smile on his face. So he always sticks out in my mind, because every now and then we will get a kid who needs to understand that he has to be a part of the voc-tech program. The dream of playing in Division I is not going to happen, so give them 2 years of education or a trade, and they can get out of here and get on down the road. You know we have got the usual success stories that everybody has in terms of moving on to a Division I level. I am not so sure those are the real success stories.

Speaking philosophically, the directors talked about the benefits of educational opportunities in increasing the goodness of society, decreasing crime, increasing earning power, and giving a sense of self-esteem and understanding.

Athletic Director AAD noted that the athletic program allowed some students, who might not be the top college candidates, a chance to get in the door with many of them having success stories. He spoke of coaches helping students grow at a crucial time in their lives:

The coaches are getting them at a pivotal time of 18 or 19 years old, and in today's world, that is a very pivotal time as to how a kid will change. You know, coaches do a little mentoring, and they are almost like a second father or mother, because they are around them so much. I feel they can get them on the right path.

Director AAD said he had hopes that student-athletes in the program would mature as men and women, make decisions for their futures, and take full advantage of their educational opportunities.

Coaches from both colleges gave a variety of perceptions regarding the educational opportunities for student-athletes. Coach AC1 said he looked at athletics as a vehicle that helps some students stay in school just as music and art motivate others to stay and get an education.



He noted that many of the players at this level came from small high schools or programs that had not won many games. Some were good players but not superstars. They were not recruited by the 4-year colleges that usually look in the metropolitan areas or look for the top athletes who may have had higher academic profiles. Coach AC1 said when he recruited, he used two criteria: (a) do they want an education? and (b) do they want to play basketball? He gave an example of two players who had no plans to go to college and had not been recruited by the 4-year colleges. Both had decent grades and were good kids from good families, but no one was looking at them. They took the educational and athletic opportunities offered by the community college coach and ended up signing Division I scholarships. He said that the discipline and structure in athletic programs could help to motivate student-athletes and help them to take advantage of their educational opportunities. When the transition is made from high school and possibly negative high school peer influence, athletic programs in the community colleges can offer stability, structure, and discipline.

Coach AC2 echoed the benefits of educational opportunities offered by the community college athletic programs and cited examples of coaches giving help in discipline, monitoring class attendance and study hall, and providing regular encouragement to stay on track to graduate.

Coach BC1 acknowledged that student-athletes came into the community college at many different levels academically, athletically, and socially. He stated that the educational opportunities they have is stressed from the beginning. He explained:

I think the biggest thing is just trying to get them to understand the importance that we place on it (educational opportunities), and that they are here for what is going on here. While the sport is important, it is secondary to what is going on in the buildings. I want them to see that I support the people that are here, so that if something comes up that is in conflict with their sport and academics, then I am going to support the academic side, and that does not waiver. You know, I try to encourage them to put forth the same effort in the classroom that they do they do in their sport. If they do that, then the success in their sport is going to very much parallel that success in the classroom.

He stated that he tried to create an atmosphere to help them be successful while keeping in mind that many of them were not familiar with the pitfalls that could happen to them as freshmen. He said he tried to prevent those pitfalls. He then reflected on his efforts to assist their academic success and said, "I try to structure the program so that it is going to allow them to stay on the path to keep them successful." In addition, he said he used class checks on attendance and study hall and stressed their educational goals. He stressed that because of more freedoms at this level as opposed to high school, that discipline and structure could help motivate them to be academically successful.

Coach BC2 also spoke of the positive effects that athletic program supports give to student-athletes to help them be academically successful. He stated that he did not wait for them to falter academically; rather, he was involved with them from the start, middle, and finish. He said he monitored class attendance from the beginning, obtained a list of all their classes and instructors, communicated travel schedules and status with their instructors, and conducted three checks a semester on their progress. He firmly stated that it was his responsibility as a coach to monitor the progress of his student-athletes. He explained more about his practice of conducting three checks per semester, stating:

I go to the athletic director and say, "Have all of their assessment sheets come in from the instructors? I would like to go over them." But, some coaches will not do that. They know it is in place, and they let the AD worry about it. They do not worry about it. But, I think it is my responsibility to know.

All of the coaches spoke of employing discipline, monitoring class and study hall attendance, and using encouragement to motivate student-athletes to achieve their academic goals and become academically successful. When asked how much influence he had in the success or failure of athletes in their academic endeavors, Coach BC2 replied, "Well, I should have a lot of influence. We should have a lot, because our goal should be to educate and graduate." He continued by giving examples of how he used his influence to help student athletes to be successful academically:

I think influence is really important, and I think I have to stress academics. For instance, "You do not practice this week because you are going to lab; you are going to the tutor; or you are going to get extra help. When you go to the doctor, you do not miss *class* to get your rehab done; you miss *practice* to get your rehab done." You know those little things can be put in place. But, again, you can have all of these wonderful programs, but if the student does not buy into it, your hands are tied and you cannot make them. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the student.

He said it was all about "getting involved with your kids," asking how they did on a paper, or keeping track of their "big academic deadlines".

Coach BC1 said he would like to think his influence had an impact. He continued:

I feel that I am a pretty strong supporter of what goes on in the classroom. Part of the reason I like teaching and doing that is because I want them to know that I am a contributing part of the system here. I think the impact is there just from the degree of importance I place on it by challenging them, questioning them, and disciplining them. If they do not do it, well then... You know I had a guy last week... He missed a couple of classes and he sat out the series. He was a starter, and I am, like, it is not going to be that way. And, am I going to catch everybody? No, I probably will not, but you send that message out and, hopefully, the other ones are listening to that message. The ones that are not will eventually be found out. I want them to know that is something that is important, and that I am not just giving lip service, throwing it out there and then, hey, whatever. No, I sell it in recruiting and I sell it when they get here, and they are going to hear it from me up until the last day they are here.

Coach AC1 spoke of discipline and monitoring in making certain that the student-athletes were doing the right things. He said if they did not, they "do a lot of running." He said he looked at the situation this way:

In a way, I guess it is punishment, but you are just trying to get them to a discipline so that they will not do the stupid stuff like cutting their classes, cutting study halls, or just going out and having a good time. They are learning to use their time wisely with a little bit of time management. I think a lot of kids at this level, not just basketball players that we are dealing with, but with a lot of kids, time management is really poor.

He said his influence was in setting a structure to push them in the right direction. He explained:

I think the success rate comes from seeing them take the time, as we talked about time management, to do all of the necessary things that you have to do to get a college education. Now, I think that I help by making my kids do certain things throughout the day, you know with our study halls and things of that nature. And we do that 5 days a week where they are there for an hour and a half every day. You know when kids first come in, a lot of them just kind of sit there for a while. But when they find out that I am

not going to change and they are going to do this, they more or less start working on what they need to do. I do not know if I am helping them or if it is just setting the structure. Then, I am going to follow up and make them do it.

Coach AC2 said that he had mandatory study hall 3 nights a week with a tutor for any needed assistance. He also monitored attendance and their academic status. He said if they missed class, they were disciplined with running or sitting out. If they got behind in a class, “We may make them miss practice or a game to go to a tutor and get better.” He said he believed he had a great influence in assuring that they were attending classes.

### *Retention*

The presidents, athletic directors, and coaches participating in this study spoke of the role of athletics in helping to keep students in college. The retention rate goal for community colleges is defined with variable considerations. It is calculated to compare one group against another. In this situation, the retention rate is being used to compare those students participating in athletics with the full-time students who do not participate in athletics. Usually, it is equated by a comparison of the number of first-time freshmen registered in the fall to the number of those first-time freshmen returning the next fall (Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, 2006).

When comparing the retention rate of student-athletes to full-time students who do not participate in the athletic programs, both athletic directors stated that the retention rate was higher for student-athletes. AAD reflected:

I think they are better. We do not lose a lot. I think we lost maybe one this time after the semester. But, the previous 2 or 3 years, I do not think we have lost any in any sport. I think that speaks well just to the kind of kids we got, and what we are able to do with them when they are here.

Director BAD reflected on the time when he was a student, recalling:

I remember when I was attending college. They said: “Look to your right and look to your left in orientation because both people will be gone at the end of the semester.” The great thing we have in athletics is we virtually can keep people here for 2 years. The retention rate is virtually 100% in our environment.

Without knowing the exact statistics, all four coaches spoke of the positive retention rate for student-athletes. Coach AC1 stated that his retention rate was really good. He said he was very fortunate but also emphasized that the structure and discipline written into their programs was the basis for the good retention rate. Coach AC2 said he believed that the retention rate for student-athletes was better than the general retention rate and gave credit to the coaches' efforts to monitor attendance and encourage graduation goals. Coach BC1 said he believed that athletics played a role in retention. He was not certain of the statistics, and did not know if the numbers would be a "fair read" because, as he said, "The 2-year college students tend to be pretty transient and the college is commuter based." Coach BC2 stated that the retention of student-athletes was very good. He said his college president was strong on bringing up the retention rate for the whole college.

When speaking of retention rates for student-athletes, most coaches and athletic directors did not necessarily equate success with retention to graduation. Coach BC2 spoke of a number of student-athletes being recruited by 4-year colleges after just 1 year at the community colleges. He said it was difficult to measure retention in some cases because some student-athletes attended 1 or 2 years, got recruited by 4-year institutions, and transferred with scholarships. He cited an example of a young female freshman athlete who had planned to transfer to a 4-year college after her second year:

She is being recruited by a lot of schools, even now. As a matter of fact, she has just been offered a full ride at (a major university), and this is after her 1st year. Now, are you going to leave? Have we prepared you? Have we put you in a position to be seen and be successful both on the field and off the field to go [to the university]? The answer is yes!

The student referred to was planning to become a teacher and a coach. The institution offering her a full scholarship had a reputation for producing good teachers. Regarding the great future possibilities she had, both academically and athletically, Coach BC2 reflected further, stating, "So, to me, that is success. Is that retention? We did our job."

## *Diversity*

Regarding the positive effects of the athletic program's influence on the mission and goals of the institution, President BP spoke of the enormous impact on the institution's diversity goals:

I do not know where we would be in our diversity program without intercollegiate athletics. The impact is very, very strong, even in academics, because these students are full-time students necessarily. They have to maintain their grades; and, they are motivated. This is a core of students who are very important to a community college.

Athletic Director BAD noted that without an athletic program, a large number of African American students would not be enrolled in the community college. He explained:

In our program, 35% to 38% are African-Americans. If we did not have our program, those students would not be here. I think diversity is good. I think it sends a message that we want a well-rounded community and a well-rounded atmosphere.

When speaking of the racial, cultural, educational, and geographical diversity of all the teams, one director noted that some of the students came from single-parent homes, some were from middle class America, some had weaker educational backgrounds, and some had high GPAs. He made the following observations regarding the makeup of the athletic teams:

The men's baseball team is largely White middle class America with an occasional African-American; many of the basketball team members are African-Americans with some coming from single-parent homes; and the women's softball team is largely White middle class America.

While noting that attributes were varied and different, he reflected further, saying:

We encourage a lot of mixing with our teams. We promote a family atmosphere. We want our teams supporting each other. I want our teams hanging out together, wherever they are from, and whatever background they are from. I think it is just healthy for them.

Both presidents and both athletic directors noted that the diversity of the community college athletic programs helped the community colleges reach their diversity goals.

## *Publicity*

The presidents, athletic directors, and coaches spoke of the variety of values of publicity that community college athletic programs brought to the community colleges. The majority

stated that the athletic programs brought a sense of excitement, activity, focus, free advertising, media coverage, service area communication, recruitment enhancement, and identity for local support to the institutions.

Concerning the benefits of publicity for the institution regarding athletic programs, the administrative and athletic staff responded in part with the following:

President AP said the athletic program created a focus in the community for good public relations with very good media coverage. President BP cited that because of the competition with so many high schools and 4-year colleges, the coverage, in his opinion, was disappointing.

Two of the athletic directors differed in their opinions of the publicity generated also. AAD stated that it was a challenge sometimes; however, the image created was very positive and good coverage amounted to free advertising. BAD stated that it was a huge challenge for his institution and said that the dominating coverage was for area high schools, 4-year universities, and national news.

Three of the four coaches of the two institutions spoke of good publicity and media coverage: AC1 said the media helped with a lot of good publicity. AC2 said there was a lot of good publicity and they enjoyed a very good relationship; BC2 said there was good publicity for his sport. Coach BC2 said there was not enough publicity and that his sport deserved better coverage.

### *Focus in Community*

The identity of the community college can be linked to its athletic programs, according to President AP. When asked what effect the athletic programs had on his institution, he spoke of the impact on enrollment, educational opportunities, and the impact on publicity:

I think it improves the overall college. Having an athletic program that is highly regarded attracts other students who might not otherwise come. You get great public relations by the athletic program. Whether it is right or wrong, many people out in the community do not see anything in your college other than athletics. I mean, you have a certain constituent group out there that will even evaluate your college on how your athletic

program is and people read about athletics in the paper. So, we get a lot of public relations value from the athletic program.

### *Media Coverage*

Although both presidents emphasized that the athletic programs had an impact on the institution and a focus in the community, they did not agree that their community college athletic programs received adequate media coverage. President AP stated that his institution received “adequate and above” media coverage. He said those results were because of consistent efforts to build a good relationship with the news media. He expounded, saying, “We get coverage as good as any college or university locally. We have to work, though, to make sure these outlying cities cover us.” He did admit that coverage from the metropolitan newspaper was not as good as it should be, considering that several good athletes at his institution came from that city. He stated that although they occasionally did a gigantic full-page, regular coverage did not happen.

President BP voiced his belief that the media did not give adequate publicity to the community college athletic program:

They do not. And I do not think that it is the program. The general public, and this reflects it in the newspapers and with sports editors, does not understand the role and value of community colleges.

President BP stated that the local 4-year college and the high schools rank much higher in media coverage even though more local athletes participated in the community college than those at the local 4-year college. He reflected:

One of our teams wins and wins, and only at the very end of the year, when they go to the nationals, are there articles about them of any significance. That is pretty bad. I think it reflects the overall problem. And it shows itself in many ways. The way the lottery was configured really worked against the community colleges. These colleges are not valued by the state. It is not athletics; it is the college itself that does not have the profile that it ought to have.

The athletic directors voiced evaluations similar to their presidents. Athletic Director AAD said the coverage was mixed; better coverage was provided when playing at home.



Considering the competition from several area high school and collegiate athletic teams, he said he thought the media coverage was pretty good. He said he felt this good coverage was because of the relationships built by the administrators at the top levels. He acknowledged he looked upon the free coverage as a positive image and a bonus.

When describing their media coverage, Director BAD said he considered his community college and another community college near the metropolitan area as step children of the community, saying, "It is virtually impossible to compete with the local 4-year college and high school athletics. Our paper tends to want to look at national events, which is very frustrating." He continued:

They are under directives, so you just kind of keep plugging away at it, but I think it is the nature of community college athletics. Do you listen to the local sports talk show? Are we ever mentioned on there? Is a community college ever mentioned on there? No, virtually not, and I talk to those guys as best I can. So, it is a huge challenge.

The coaches of different sports from both institutions differed in their evaluations of media coverage with two considering the coverage very good; one considering that coverage was good for covering games; and one saying that the coverage had not been good for a number of years and that the college did not get the publicity it deserved.

Coach AC1 said the coverage was very good, especially considering the competition for coverage from area high schools and colleges. He summarized by saying, "We always get something." Coach AC2 said the local media supported the college with a lot of coverage mainly because of the relationship built by the president and top administrators. When asked what effect the athletic program had on the community college, Coach AC2 spoke of the media coverage of the athletic programs, saying:

I think it has a great effect, because we get more publicity through athletics than any other department is going to get. Every day, you are either going to see a big picture in the paper about basketball, baseball, softball, or whatever. It is going to be in there and there are going to be write-ups. People talk and see that. They talk about that more than they talk about your math department, English department, or whatever, because the media gives us great coverage.

Coach BC1 stated that the local media were very supportive of his athletic program by covering the games. Coach BC2 said the coverage of his institution's athletic program was not enough. He stated that the lack of coverage was consistent over a number of years even after following a set of guidelines for the coverage to happen. He concluded by saying, "For some reason, we just still, in my opinion, do not get the publicity we deserve."

### *Service Area*

Student-athletes do not always attend community colleges in their service area. They sometimes cross the entire state to attend a community college that recruits them. Community colleges enroll students from within their service areas, outside their service areas, outside the state, and very rarely, outside the country. The original intended plan of the Tennessee Department of Education in 1963 was to create a Tennessee community college system across the state in a configuration that would provide a community college within 50 miles of every adult citizen (Cleveland State Community College, 2005 ). Since that time, the configuration of service areas for the 13 current community colleges has changed with the result that they sometimes overlap in their service areas and the programs they offer. Today, some of the community colleges are located in more rural areas and some are located in more densely populated metropolitan areas. Students today cross service areas to enroll in any of the community colleges and some come from outside the state. With the expansion of the community college system, there are more opportunities for low-cost educational opportunities for all adult citizens of the state. The programs offered by each institution appeal to a variety of groups of people wanting educational opportunities.

It should be noted that the student-athletes who participated in this study came from a number of service areas in the state's system. All of the student-athletes in this study lived in Tennessee and came from all parts of the state. They were all recruited by the two colleges participating in this study, with some also being recruited by other community colleges and 4-

year colleges within the state and outside the state. For a variety of reasons, they ended up in the athletic programs of the two community colleges participating in this study. They all stated that the desire that motivated them was the opportunity to participate in collegiate athletics.

According to the athletic directors, a large number of their student-athletes not participating in this study came from outside the state and occasionally from outside the country. The mixture of the demographics of the student-athletes in the community college system can change from year to year. Student-athletes can be recruited from a variety of areas, but TBR sets limitations on the number of out-of-state tuition performance waivers for each institution. The athletic directors, speaking of the limitations and TBR guidelines, said that they also have strict guidelines on the amount of money that could be spent on athletics.

### *Recruitment*

When Institution A and Institution B send recruiters to the high schools in their service areas, the recruiters are looking for students for all the programs offered by their institutions. Athletic directors noted that many times students who are not prospective athletes were interested in the college's athletic programs. Athletic director AAD observed, "A lot of times athletics help build an institution's name." He pointed out that students who do not participate in athletics are influenced sometimes to enroll in the community college based on their perceptions about the community college's athletic program.

President AP cited the recognition of athletic programs in recruiting efforts. He stated his belief that the athletic programs influenced those prospective students who were not athletes. He explained by adding, "Having an athletic program that is highly regarded attracts other students who might not otherwise come."

President BP also said he thought that the athletic programs attracted students other than the athletes. He stated that intercollegiate athletics helped build the character of the college and provided a focus with extracurricular activities.

### *Local Support*

Another aspect of the publicity value gained from the college's athletic program is to gain public support for the college's variety of programs including support for its athletic programs. President AP, who spoke of good media coverage for his institution, also indicated that his college fundraising events earned thousands of dollars each year for the athletic program. The local support was expressed in donations and in attendance at some of the athletic events. Some of the coaches noted having very good attendance at some of the games. Many times, there were more local adults in attendance than students of the college, showing appreciation for the quality of the program.

Advertising by local businesses also represents the benefit of the public image of the institution. The local athletic-support clubs also raise funds to support the athletic programs, by selling advertisement signs for the gymnasium or the baseball fields, or by selling club memberships for donations. Local businesses sometimes donate equipment or funds designated for improvement to athletic facilities. Such fund raising events and donations add needed funds for travel, uniforms, meals, on the road games, or needed improvements to the sports facilities. One of the presidents explained one aspect of what the local support provides:

You want your players to be comfortable and you want them to have good uniforms. When they travel, you want them to travel well and eat well on the road. That is what I look at. I do not want the students coming here to represent this college not feeling good about the program.

He added:

We need to do something more for the student-athletes. You know a student-athlete who will come to a community college, and he or she may be just as good or almost as good as a student-athlete who goes to a university. At the universities, they sit around training tables and eat and have everything given to them. It is almost discriminatory, you know, against the community college athlete.

### *Presidential, Faculty, and Staff Support*

When asked what the general feelings were of other employees (faculty, staff, and administration) on their campuses regarding having athletic programs, both presidents expressed positive perceptions. President AP spoke of having widely accepted approval and described, "We have always incorporated athletics into the total college environment by saying that it was not necessarily separate from academics, but is linked to academics."

He continued:

Of most of the faculty groups and the other staff members, except athletics, I have not had one person in many, many years to ever criticize us having athletics here at the college. I have never had a complaint from a faculty member about funding athletics.

President BP stated:

I do not perceive that we ever have anything but a very positive attitude about sports, but I cannot speak down to the individual. There may be a handful of people who think we ought to put the money elsewhere and not have sports. But, overwhelmingly, there is support for the sports programs.

Athletic directors reported that the feeling of the other employees was largely positive. Director AAD described his college as having "a big family type of atmosphere" saying that programs were supportive of each other. He added, "Everybody here is treated as family, and athletics is a part of that."

Director BAD spoke of being in his capacity for a few years and then said, "By and large, they have been very positive. I hardly receive any negativity whatsoever."

When asked to what degree faculty and staff supported the college athletic program, the coaches spoke of general support for the program and gave varied examples of support.

Coach AC1 spoke of faculty and staff members' attendance at the games:

I have been here a number of years, and there are a lot of faculty and staff members and administrators who have come to the ballgames. You know, they may not be here for every game, but they may come 2 or 3 times a year. I think it just depends on the individual.

Coach AC2 spoke of coaching a number of years at other schools and then acknowledged that the support at his current college was the best ever. He expressed his pleasure at the support, saying, "It is great!"

Coach BC1, after conceding that he was relatively new in the position, said he thought they seemed supportive. He reflected on his previous experience at another college outside the TBR system where he had to deal with varying degrees of support:

You have the staunch supporters, and those are the ones that are there for whatever. I mean, they are going to help you and do whatever within reason they can do to help you out. They are going to support you in the community, and they are going to back you. And you have, I do not know, kind of the front running ones that when things are going a little bit good, or they have a kid in their class that is exceptional, they are going to back the program.

He spoke of others who did not seem to care:

And then, I think you have the ones that really do not care for it and see it as a money source that is taking money away from maybe more needy areas and have kind of a built-in desire to not really support it very much. But, I think that is athletics in general. I think you deal with a wide range, whether it is in the community or in the college. You deal with a wide range. It is a pretty volatile subject. This college seems pretty supportive.

Coach BC2 spoke of earlier difficulties when a student was not allowed to make up a test missed because of travel for an away game. He discussed setting up policies and communication, saying:

When we started having problems with it one semester, especially in the spring because of baseball and softball missing so much, I met with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and told of the problem we were having with some of the instructors. So, we got a policy in place that says that students that are away from this class due to college representation should be allowed to do X-Y-Z. Not only did we get that policy, but we attached that policy with the letter to the instructor the first time around that explained what we were doing.

He noted that the student-athlete also has responsibilities to communicate:

But again, it all comes down to the student. If the student does not talk and communicate with the instructor, "Oh, we were at a game yesterday. That is why I was not in class." You know, after the fact is not good. So again, the student has got to help us out on that.

Coach BC2 said the faculty and staff were very supportive.

When student-athletes were asked if there had been staff members or support services that were particularly helpful, all eight of the student-athletes cited some area of support. Two cited guidance counselors for helping to schedule classes and file applications to 4-year colleges. Four cited the help of teachers, with one citing the English teacher for working well with him. Tutors were cited by three of the student-athletes for helping in study hall 2 or 3 times a week and summers. ASA3 indicated that a tutor was always present in the fall every Tuesday and Thursday for math and science assistance. The library staff members were cited by ASA2 and ASA3 for having given special help. BSA1 said, "Definitely the coach; all the coaches were close with all of the teams." The coaches were cited by ASA2, BSA1, and BSA3 for giving guidance and assistance. The athletic director and other staff members were acknowledged by two of the participants. ASA4 spoke of everyone at the college being very supportive and very pleasant including "people in the cafeteria, the coach, the tutors, the athletic director, the lawyers, the president, the bus driver." All the student-athletes had positive feelings from the support and assistance they had received.

When the student-athletes were asked if they believed the institution supported athletics, they looked at a variety of ways in which the institution showed support. Good facilities, good teams, administrative cookouts with the teams, and teachers working with students to help make up tests missed because of away games were some of the areas of support noted. BSA1 said, "There was definite support; teachers work with students to make up tests, and a lot of them come to games." BSA2 said that tutors and staff members were always willing to help. Others said that teachers were very supportive. ASA3 and BSA3 spoke of the attention and coverage shown by the staff with banners hanging up with players' names and documentaries being filmed. ASA3 said, "The teachers and support staff will do anything to help you out, and they want you to get an education." Another participant spoke of decent support saying his team raised money to buy uniforms and equipment.

When asked if they believed they had the assistance needed to succeed both as students and as athletes, all of the student-athletes said, "Yes." Coaches were noted for stressing academics in the classroom and study hall. Student-athlete ASA4 spoke of the coach pushing and stressing academics, relating, "Yes, he is a big reason why I am like pushing myself, because his pressure or I guess you can use the word 'assistance' and he is pushing me!"

Coaches were also cited for help in finding 4-year schools for transfers. Coaches and teachers were credited for giving the extra push for helping student-athletes to do better. Many of the participants said they thought that counselors, tutors, coaches, teachers, and support staff worked to assure that all work was done.

Student-athlete ASA2 spoke of the benefits of being housed in apartments close to the school and library, saying:

It is no problem to come home from practice, get your books, go there and be in the library. You can be there in 5 minutes, and it is open late until about 9:00. So, you have plenty of time to get things done.

When asked to recall the amount of time he had spent in the library that year, he added:

Well, if I have a test, I go there probably because it is kind of loud there at the apartments, so I would go there for quietness. And, I would go there probably 3 nights before the test for a couple of hours each night to study.

Student-athlete BSA3 said that everyone was quick to give assistance when needed.

When asked if their college presidents were supportive of their sport and to give suggestions for how they could be more supportive, the student-athletes' responses were generally supportive for the athletic programs but mixed for some sports. President A was described as supportive-to-very-supportive. The students noted that he attended the home games, held cookouts for all the teams, knew the players by names, interacted with the student-athletes on campus, and knew what they liked to do. Student-athlete ASA4 acknowledged the degree of presidential support expressed by others and talked of having conversations as they walked in the hall, noting:



He is very supportive of the sport. He is the kind of person who will always walk in the hall. And, he will say, "I told Coach about some plays we need to be running for you." He will really tell you. Like, he watches the games and he knows about the games. He knows each and every player and what they like to do. You know he respects you as a player and a person. He will tell me when we are walking down the hall, "You know, you come off the back screen and flare out for a three. That is your shot!"

This student then reflected on the interview question regarding support and concluded, "No, I think he has done a wonderful job!"

Student-athlete ASA2 expressed disappointment that his sport did not receive great support from the college president. He said he never saw him at any of the golf team matches. Although there is work study, there are no scholarships for golf student-athletes. He said he felt that to compete with some of the more competitive schools, "You have to have to have athletic scholarships to get the talent to compete."

President BP was described by the student-athletes as being very supportive. Half of the participants said they felt that he could be more visible at their games, while the other half of the participants said they thought he was very supportive and visible at theirs. BSA2 expressed his perception, saying:

He comes to games every once in awhile. You see him there every other weekend, and he is there. I do not really know the guy personally, but I know who he is. He is visible. He really could not be any more supportive than he is. I mean, he gets things done the way it should be done. He lets us get things done on time.

Two of the other student-athletes at Institution B said they did not really know their president very well; however, they said they felt he could show more support by attending more of their games.

### *Mentors*

When asked what memorable advice any instructor or coach had given on a regular basis that had helped them, the student-athletes responded with a variety of advice.

Student-athlete ASA1 spoke of the regular encouragement given by his coach to "Stay on the right track and do not get sidetracked with other things" or "Just keep a good head and stay

focused on school and sports.” The wellness teacher always encouraged this student by saying, “Stay focused and work hard.”

Student-athlete ASA2 spoke of his coach’s memorable advice "just to work hard" and then added, " I mean, he preaches that every day!"

ASA3 said the coach gave him good advice, saying, “You just have to be your best at all times!”

Student-athlete ASA4 spoke of being around the coach several hours of the day and being able to interact with him in an informal manner. The student-athlete, who had a current GPA of 3.4, repeated what the coach was always saying, "The only thing that I will get told everyday is that Coach will tell me to 'Get upstairs to study hall!' Everyday! He always tells me everyday to get my grades up."

Student-athlete BSA1 talked of the encouragement given by the athletic director, saying, He is always telling me, “You can do anything you want!”

Because community colleges do not have dorms, some students hang around the campus because they cannot go home between classes. BSA1 talked about his coach's door always being open and that many athletes take this opportunity to talk to him. He observed, "He always loves it when we just come in and talk to him. He is kind of friend to us and someone we can talk to."

Student-athlete BSA2 said the coach was always saying, “Do not show emotion.” This student said that the coach was always like that, whether being ahead in the game or behind. He explained that the coach did not allow them to “mouth off,” “act stupid,” or “be an idiot” to the other team.

Student-athlete BSA3 recalled memorable words of encouragement from his coach as being “Do not give up!” and “Keep on going!”

Student-athlete BSA4 said that although he had had a lot of things said to him, he was impressed more by what his coach was always saying. He illustrated:

Coach says it is always about being a player. If you are not doing what you are supposed to do out there, you are not going to do it in the classroom. He tells me all the time, “You

have got to be a player!” He says it out there, but I relate it to school. I mean, I have a lot of things said to me. Some of it has gone through one ear and out the other. But, I just know that if I do not do it, nothing comes easy.

### *Student Development Services*

Student development services play a large role in testing and placement of students who do not meet the minimum required ACT/SAT scores, have insufficient GPAs, or who do not have required coursework from their high school transcripts. Because community colleges have an open door policy, students who do not meet the level of requirements are tested and placed in remedial classes, if needed. The student development and testing centers of the community colleges assist students with class schedules, choosing a major, transferring to 4-year colleges, tutoring, developing resumes, and counseling in personal issues (Cleveland State Community College, 2005).

The presidents, their athletic staffs, and the students credited the different supports of the institutions’ student development services in helping students with testing, placement, career counseling, planning career paths, and counseling for personal issues.

### *Values Perceived From Athletics*

When asked what values they received from participating in athletics, the student-athletes who participated in this study stated the following as being values they have received:

1. recognition,
2. patience,
3. becoming a better person,
4. self-discipline,
5. maturity,
6. pushing yourself,
7. teamwork,

8. knowing people better,
9. working hard,
10. perseverance,
11. working together,
12. self-confidence,
13. loving the game—keep working to keep playing,
14. leadership,
15. God gave me the gift to play basketball, and
16. loving basketball and winning.

The love of participation in athletics was possessed by many more students than just the eight who participated in this study as reflected by a much larger number of student-athletes on the teams. The eight students representing the four sports teams reflected their perceptions of playing and its effects on them. One of the participants in this study spoke of her love of participation, its affect on her ultimate career goal, and how participating in athletics had influenced her pursuit of an education and consequent career goal. She reflected by saying, "I want to graduate knowing that after 4 years I have played basketball. I have gotten through school because of my athletic ability!"

The presidents, athletic directors, and coaches also spoke of the same opportunities and some of the same values listed by the student-athletes. They noted their perceptions of the kinds of values that student-athletes learn as being:

1. leadership development,
2. some sense of civic responsibility,
3. loyalty,
4. being on time,
5. understanding a team concept,
6. cooperation,

7. how to win and lose with class and dignity,
8. how to be competitive,
9. how to develop individual strengths and skills,
10. how to get along with people,
11. how to be a part of a team,
12. how to follow rules,
13. discipline,
14. learning how to make independent decisions,
15. adjustment to being on their own,
16. how to accept responsibilities a little quicker, and
17. forced to grow up a little faster.

President A said, “Those values are expressed in athletics and they may not be as stressed in a structured way in other parts of the college.”

### *Challenges for the Institution*

When asked about the challenges of having athletic programs at the community college level, some areas of challenges noted by the presidents and athletic staffs were: (a) difficulty of recruitment, (b) keeping the athletic programs competitive and keeping them part of the college, (c) getting students to take their educational experience more seriously and not blow their additional opportunities for an education, (d) getting good housing environment, (e) and finding ways to enable them to have enough food to eat.

### *Recruitment Difficulties*

President BP stated that his number one challenge was the difficulty of recruiting every year to build good teams with student-athletes who build good attitudes and skills for competitive programs. Providing a good situation where student-athletes are a part of the college

and getting an education was the goal of the program and the recruitment efforts. He said, essentially, rebuilding was a yearly exercise and required great efforts to compete with other colleges for the best talents, athletically and academically.

Athletic director AAD talked of trying to recruit the good students with good values and those who had good academic backgrounds, as well as athletic abilities. He stated:

I think we try to recruit good kids, as far as their own values. We spend a lot of time talking with their parents. Occasionally, you are going to take a chance and give somebody an opportunity who may not have had the best background coming into it; but, I think, overall, we try to recruit people that we think will be successful in our program here.

Athletic director BAD talked about sometimes accepting a GPA that was lower in some respects in order to give educational opportunities to someone who came from a generally deprived educational and socioeconomic background.

The difficulties in recruiting apparently were more than just trying to recruit good athletes with good academic backgrounds. Coach AC2 spoke of the search for athletes with good academic backgrounds as well as other characteristics:

We are definitely looking for good people, and not only good athletes. We try to get as many academic people that we can. You do not have near as much trouble in the classroom with them going to class as you do with just a good ball player that is here to play ball.

Coach AC2 also said he thought that the greatest determinant for a student athlete's success in college was time management, a characteristic that was not always determined by transcripts or interviews. He elaborated:

He has to manage his time. He cannot be a follower. He has got to be his own person, because you can get with the wrong groups in college. I have seen some good kids go bad because they followed other bad kids. But, I think those are the two main things. One is do not be a follower, and two, you have to manage your time.

Coach AC1 talked about the recruitment of student-athletes as being a search for something beyond good transcripts:

First of all, I think the biggest determinant [for a student-athlete's success] is finding the kids that want a college education. The reason I say that is not all kids want a college

education. They want the experience of being at school, but, they do not want to do the work.

Coach BC1 stated that good transcripts were not necessarily an indicator for success in college and that weaker academic transcripts were not a predictor for failure. He spoke of the many different levels: academically, athletically, and socially. He reflected:

You try to evaluate as you are recruiting them, but the reality is until you bring them in and deal with them on a daily basis . . . At this level, particularly, it is tough because so many of the kids are, to a degree, flawed in some area.

The difficulty in recruiting good students with good academics and good athletic abilities was more than an objective search for those two factors. Coach BC2 said that although some students had adequate ACT or SAT scores, many were not prepared for college courses. He spoke of a number of other characteristics he looked for in addition to athletic ability and physical build:

I look, too, when I talk to them, at how they handle themselves in a conversation with me one on one, how mature they are and are they able to answer the questions. Can they filter through the stuff I am asking them and figure out how to answer the question? I look at how they interact with their parents and me.

He reflected further on the success or failure of student-athletes and said:

Sometimes, you get surprised, and people are successful who you did not think would be. But, a lot of times, I find that most of these students here...their parents did not go to college. Or, if they did, they never completed college. And so, we even have a lot of first generation [college students] . . . even now, students coming out of high school. I think that has a lot to do with it.

### *Preparation for College Courses and Remedial Classes*

When asked what level of preparation for college work student-athletes possessed prior to enrollment in the community colleges, one of the coaches spoke of the variety of levels of preparation and the current academic status of some of the student-athletes. Whereas some struggled because of lack of preparation before enrolling in college courses, others were at the high end of the spectrum. One coach recalled the previous year when seven or eight student-athletes had 4.0 GPAs, and several more had 3.0 GPAs. With the added responsibility of making

up work and tests because of away games, these players still maintained their academic standings. One of the coaches stated that eight current student-athletes on his team alone qualified for academic scholarships. He said it was his perception that "The good students were going to stay good students." He added:

You are going to have a lot of students that come in behind. They have to take a lot of remedial classes, and it is hard for them to catch up. It is hard for them to graduate. I guess, to answer your question, the good students are going to stay good students. And with the other students, you just got to stay on them, and sometimes you can help them enough to make them improve and catch up. But, there are some of them that are never going to catch up.

In spite of having very successful academic achievements in some years, the coaches spoke of the lack of preparation for college work. The coaches gave a variety of descriptions. Coach AC1 said there was a wide variety from year to year, saying, "We have had some who come in with an ACT score of 12; others come in with scores of 25 and 26."

Coach AC2 stated, "Well, academically, a lot of times you get students that you wonder how they graduated from high school. I mean, they just were not prepared to come to college."

Coach BC1 stated:

I really do not come into each situation with them with a perception that they are already at a certain level, because so many of them are coming in from so many different levels, academically, athletically, and socially. At this level, particularly, it is tough because so many of the kids are to a degree somewhat flawed in some area, whether it is academically, athletically, or socially. The situation can go both ways. You really figure that you had a kid who was rock solid and he came in with just a mess academically. I have had kids whose transcripts looked very bad, but came in and did a really good job, because they did understand the need.

Coach BC2 stated:

Seventy-five to 80% of them are unprepared, honestly, coming in. They end up coming in behind instead of being able to start right into college work. Seventy-five percent of them, at least, will take one remedial and developmental course, if not more. It backs them up in terms of getting out of the junior college in 2 years.

Recalling a year when several athletes became ineligible after 1 term, coach BC2 spoke of the institution's development of an athletic success program that involved meeting with all



athletes, assisting with planning their schedules, and making certain they had tutoring and were going to classes. He spoke of the changes:

We went from losing 10 to 12 kids in a semester to losing no more than 1 or 2. So we saw a significant difference in having that program in place. It has helped our kids individually to be more successful.

The athletic directors and coaches spoke of the difficulties in recruiting good students or good student-athletes. Sometimes, reviews of transcripts did not always indicate the level of preparation for college courses. Without the minimum levels of ACT/SAT scores or the minimum GPA, many students (including those not participating in athletics) were required to go through testing and assessment for placement in the appropriate level of classes. After testing and evaluations are done by the students' development staffs, some are required to take remedial classes. For some students, that may create a delay in graduation or transfer to 4-year colleges, and sometimes, it means a failure to catch up. The number of students required to take remedial classes varies from year to year. Negative rates can affect the success profiles for the community colleges.

When athletic director BAD was asked what factors were most important for the growth and maturity of student-athletes at his college, he spoke of the athletic convocation at the beginning of the year when all of the student-athletes are assembled and he goes through a litany of things in the athletic handbook. In that convocation, he lays out expectations for success “from athletic, academic, and social points of view.” He talked of “setting them up with the ability to succeed through their academic schedule.” He explained why assistance with planning their schedules was important in helping students to adapt, mature, and achieve:

To know that they can then achieve at the college level and bring them along. Very rarely do I ever give anybody sciences at the beginning when they get here. That is a disaster. So, I think that helps their maturity so they know they can succeed; we know they can succeed.

## *Housing and Food*

Community colleges do not provide housing. Although the campuses do not have housing facilities, some community colleges do try to work with private entities in their communities to make apartments available for rent to students. According to both presidents, this is a problem. President AP spoke of the need for getting a good affordable housing environment:

You cannot expect athletes to work part-time like other students. So the big challenge is when we bring in athletes from out of the area and other cities, towns, and even few out of state. These athletes have to have somewhere to live.

Although President AP said he believed the housing environment was currently adequate for his institution, he was concerned that some of the athletes did not get enough food to eat. He spoke of the problem:

You give them the Pell Grant and you give them some athletic aid, and that is all they have. They cannot work because they are practicing every day. So we have had some athletes here that we feel like did not eat properly.

He spoke of a proposal made by a student service counselor to try to find a solution, and made an observation:

You know about one third of our athletes are so poor when they come in that what we give them in the way of an athletic scholarship and Pell Grant, it is not enough for them to live on. So, we are working on that.

President BP cited similar problems, noting a basic need of having housing facilities on campus. Many of the athletes do not live close to college or have the means of transportation or the financial means to provide housing nearby. According to some of the participants in this study, the community colleges appeared to have predominantly commuter-based students who worked part-time or full-time jobs with some being able to attend evening classes. There may be other students who are not participating in athletic programs with similar situations or difficulties; however, student-athletes cannot work and participate in athletics. In some situations, finding suitable and affordable housing and transportation is a real problem.

### *Scholarships, Work-Study, and Financial Aid*

No specific questions were asked regarding the financial means of each student-athlete in this study, nor were the other participant groups probed for that information. In analyzing the data, however, the perceptions given by all groups did supply some information regarding scholarships, work-study, and financial aid.

Three of the student-athletes spoke of being on academic or athletic scholarships. Two of the student-athletes said that they had lost scholarships because of insufficient GPAs. One of the student-athletes said scholarships were not given for his sport and he was participating in the work-study program. This study did not reveal the complete records scholarships, work-study, and financial status of the participants in this study. It is also not known what the record is for all of the athletes at these institutions or in the entire community college system. Without doing a quantitative analysis and gaining access to the institutional records, that information was not available. Only through the voluntary responses by some of the student-athletes was there a glimpse of how they were able to pay for college.

### *Challenges for the Student-Athletes*

Student-athletes spoke of the challenges of participation in athletics while trying to be successful in their academic programs. Collectively, the challenges noted by the participants included the following: (a) study hall, (b) tutoring, (c) making up classes and tests, and (d) the dual responsibilities of athletics and keeping on top with academics. While none of the students mentioned taking remedial classes (and they were not asked), the presidents and athletic staff members did cover the subject in depth. The challenges that the eight student-athletes did speak of were the following:

1. Five of the students talked about the regular, sometimes frequent, and mandatory study halls.

2. Three of the students said that tutors were available in study hall or available for assistance.
3. Five of the students talked about the stress of making up class work or tests after absence for away games.
4. Five of the students talked about the difficulty in maintaining dual responsibilities for athletics (long, tiring practices) and academics (studying for tests and homework and being too tired to study).
5. One student mentioned frustration over the lack of scholarships in his sport, saying that it reduced the competitiveness of the team against other teams in the league that did give scholarships for that sport.

### *Time Management*

Athletic directors and coaches cited time management as being a large deterrent for the academic success of student-athletes. Talking about how easy it was for some students to get behind in their studies, coaches cited the ongoing need for monitoring of class attendance and study hall to help student-athletes be successful.

Some of the student-athletes spoke about the pressures of time to get everything done. Two of the eight students did not plan to participate in athletics when transferring to 4- year colleges. They wanted more time to concentrate on their academic and career plans.

### *Academic Focus*

Some of the student-athletes cited the difficulty of maintaining a good academic focus. For some, according to the coaches' responses, it was the pressure of being backed up by taking remedial classes. For others, it was the dual time pressures of practice and studies or the demands of making up tests because of absence from class for away games.

Some of the coaches and athletic directors spoke of the lack of preparation for college work or the need for remedial classes that kept some students from graduating in 2 years. Some of the athletic staff cited the lack of maturity with some in the younger age group and the lack of self-discipline in time management to meet all of their responsibilities for class attendance, study halls, or makeup tests. The coaches also noted that some of the student-athletes were living away from home for the first time and had trouble making good judgments and decisions on their own.

Student-athlete ASA2 talked of the difficulty of concentrating on studies after days when he practiced his sport for 4 or 5 hours. He said that he would be graduating in the spring with an associate's degree then transferring to a 4-year college. He did not plan to participate in sports at the 4-year college. He explained:

When you come home from practice after you have practiced 4 or 5 hours a day, you are really tired. You have to almost make yourself study if you have to study. Otherwise, you are real tired, and you really do not want to.

While talking about their individual challenges, all student-athletes seemed to cite the mandatory study halls, tutoring, homework on the road, making up class work and tests, and long, tiring practices in a positive way. The assistance they were getting was viewed as a plus in receiving the package of athletic and educational opportunities.

### *Housing and Food*

While some of the student-athletes were asked follow-up questions regarding their responses about scholarships, work-study, and financial aid, they were not asked any probing questions regarding their personal finances--and they did not broach the subject. Nor did the student-athletes discuss their personal situations regarding food, money, or other needs in this study. However, the presidents, athletic directors, and coaches did talk about their situations.

When speaking of some of the challenges of academic focus, remedial classes, and good housing environment at the community college level, President AP reluctantly brought up the

subject of food. He spoke of receiving a proposal from a counselor who was saying some of the student-athletes did not have enough money to eat. He said he already knew that many of the athletes came from very poor backgrounds and he felt that athletic scholarships and Pell Grants were not enough to live on. Because of the restrictions for athletic expenditures governed by TBR and the NJCCA, he was finding it difficult to determine a good solution. He reflected, saying, "You know, about one third of our athletes are so poor when they come in that what we give them in the way of an athletic scholarship and Pell Grant is not enough for them to live on."

President BP spoke of the great need for affordable housing on or near the campus. He talked of the diverse population of students and the need for residential units on campus to facilitate the housing needs of students.

### *Attributes for Success*

In the community college system, many of the recruiters are coaches who are helping to recruit for all programs. When trying to recruit student-athletes, the coaches look for athletic talent by going to high school games and tournaments, contacting high school coaches for references, and talking to many people about specific talented athletes. Talent is never the total search, however, as academic standing is sometimes the most important measure in determining future success in college. As some of the coaches in this study indicated, however, looking at good transcripts is no guarantee either.

Coach BC2 spoke of his difficulties in recruiting and finding students with the best characteristics and attributes that could predict success. He said he looked for students with athletic ability, the right physical build for the sport, a certain maturity level indicated by how they handled themselves in conversations one on one, and how they interacted with their parents and him. He said he looked for a level of maturity because of his past experience. He explained:

I do not know about the normal population, because I am more in tune with the athletes instead of just our normal kids. But, what I have seen happen is a kid will leave here, do

bad, stop going, and come back in 4 or 5 years, and they do much better, because they are older and more mature.

In addition, he said he wondered about their level of preparation for college work, saying:

I do not know what Tennessee has to do. You know they are looking at the ACT and the SAT scores. I think that is great, but I am not so sure we are not just preparing them just for those tests. You are preparing them for success in the courses they are going to be faced with when they are here!

Coach BC1 said he looked for strong character and a solid maturity level from student-athletes who will “look you in the eye” and are “straight up and responsible.” He added he looks for those who show responsibility and have integrity and honesty. He revealed that sometimes he noticed a trend for typical grades when he looked at transcripts. For instance, he might notice that “Grades are really poor as a freshman and sophomore; grades got better as a junior; and grades got a lot better as a senior because reality has set in.” The coach said he looked for the best collective assessment with the parents, the coaches, and the advisors. He stated that one could not always predict, even with good transcripts, because so many of the student-athletes come in from “so many different levels academically, athletically, and socially.” He said he wanted athletes who had reputations for time management and commitment. He stated his basic criteria, “I want kids that want to be here and that are committed to what we are committed to, and that is working hard in the classroom and in the field to be successful.”

Coach AC2 said he looked for good student-athletes who were good people first and who answered correctly to the following qualifications in recruitment, “If you are just coming here to play your sport, we do not want you. If you are coming here to get an education and graduate, then let’s talk.”

Coach AC1 discussed two basic criteria when recruiting student-athletes: a desire for a college education and a desire to play basketball. After stating his belief that ambition is a key to future success, he explained:

I take a lesser student-athlete in order to get kids that want a college education. And I think that is the key, especially in our system, where we do not have a great deal of

money that we give kids. So, I look at a lot of different avenues in order to try to get them in school.

### *Summary*

The analysis of the data in this study revealed perceptions of beneficial impact on the institutions in a number of areas. Both presidents, both athletic directors, and all the coaches cited the following primary positive impacts on their institutions: (a) the mission and goals of their institutions, (b) significant increases in enrollment, (c) providing academic and athletic opportunities for a specific group need, and (d) developing a focus in the communities for the institutions.

They also stated they saw beneficial impacts on the success in helping student-athletes plan and reach their career goals. They expressed additional positive impacts in motivating students, attaining higher goals in retention and diversity while using frugal budgets that did not impact other needs of the institutions.

The main challenges noted by the presidents, the athletic directors, and the coaches pertained to the following areas:

1. Difficulties in recruiting to compete for the best talents in academics and athletics.
2. The lack of preparation for college work for some of the student-athletes as well as the rest of the student body.
3. The need for remedial classes.
4. Reduced or stagnant funding for the colleges; this impacts the athletic programs as well as all of the programs of the institutions.

The perceptions of the eight student-athletes revealed positive and negative impacts. All of the student-athletes spoke of their motivation to participate in sports while obtaining an education. Without that athletic participation, all of them said that they would not have gone to their community colleges. Without the opportunity to continue in athletics, most said that they would not have gone to college. Some stated that when they were recruited to participate in



athletic programs, they had no plans or opportunities to go to college. Without those opportunities, some would have gotten jobs and not have gone to college. They cited the educational opportunities and the assistance and support by the presidents, the faculty, and the administrative and athletic staffs to help them plan careers and be successful in their career paths.

The data in this study also revealed some challenges perceived by students pertaining to the difficulties in participating in dual paths of academics and athletics. They expressed the challenges they found in time management, study time, making up class work and tests because of away games, and the ongoing stress to stay on top of academic responsibilities. Along with those challenges, they still expressed satisfaction and motivation for participating in the athletic programs.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Summary*

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of athletic programs at two institutions in the community college system governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. Sixteen participants from two institutions in the system were interviewed. Each institution was represented by its president, its athletic director, two of its coaches from two different sports, and four student-athletes representing four different sports. Each participant in this study was interviewed using the same set of questions developed for his or her group. The four interview guides were tested and refined by conducting a pilot study at one of the institutions in the TBR system. The pilot study group comprised the institution's president, its athletic director, two coaches representing two sports, and five athletes representing five different sports in the institution's athletic program.

After conducting the interviews, emergent themes were derived from an analysis of the interviews. The perceptions of the impact of the athletic programs on the institution and the student-athletes, educational opportunities, and career path opportunities were discovered through the interview process.

#### *Research Question 1*

Research Question 1 focused on the perceptions of presidents, athletic directors, coaches, and student athletes concerning the impact of athletics on their institution. The impact on the mission of the institution, the educational and career opportunities for a number of students, enrollment increases because of the athletes and those who follow them, motivation, retention, diversity, and a focus in the community are the primary beneficial impacts of the athletic

programs. The student-athletes view the athletic programs primarily as opportunities to continue in their desired athletic paths while getting an education and opportunities at 4-year colleges. Student-athletes are being given great educational opportunities and the valuable assistance and mentoring by faculty, staff, and coaches help them plan and execute their paths to careers and/or 4-year colleges. Student-athletes are being retained, are being motivated to follow their career goals, and are achieving educational goals..

There are some challenges in having successful programs. Challenging or negative impacts on the institution pertain to the lack of preparation of high school graduates to do college work, recruitment, stagnant budgets, and the housing and subsistence problems of student-athletes. Other challenges for students are time management for their dual participation in academics and athletics, the difficulty in maintaining academic focus, and the struggles to be on their own with housing, enough money for food, and wisdom in making their own decisions.

Preparation for college work varies with the student-athlete population as it does with the entire student body. There is a need for remediation for some student-athletes and some of the general student body as well. Some of the coaches spoke of the great need for remediation classes for incoming freshmen. One of the coaches wondered how some were able to graduate from high school. The athletic teams represent many of the cultural, social, and economic influences in American society that can impact the path to academic success. In spite of the obstacles they face, many are making progress and having success.

The lack of preparation for college work impacts on the progress of some student-athletes. The need for academic assistance by some, in the form of extensive remediation classes, can severely impact attainment of degrees in 2 years. Some never catch up. Some students do not overcome those obstacles in order to earn certificates or degrees or transfer to 4-year institutions.

The difficulty in recruiting students with the best academic and athletic abilities is a yearly, or almost yearly, exercise for the community colleges. The 2-year colleges are

essentially building new teams every year. Getting the best students academically and athletically is a very difficult task when competing with 4-year colleges and other community colleges.

The lack of housing near campus and the inability to work while participating on athletic teams sometimes create economic and logistical problems for student-athletes. Affordable and privately-owned and managed housing located near one of the colleges in this study offers a good environment for students at an affordable rate. Other community colleges do not have the same advantages for students. The convenience of being able to go to the library, to classes, or to practice was considered very beneficial in being able to maintain academic studies and participate in athletics.

The impoverishment of some student-athletes impacts the ability to obtain good environment in housing and enough money to eat. For those who come from very poor families, the Pell Grants, scholarships, and financial aid are not enough to cover their basic needs.

### *Research Question 2*

The purpose of Research Question 2 was to determine the extent to which participating in athletics in the TBR community colleges assisted students in reaching their goals past college. An athletic program is a motivator or a vehicle for student-athletes to continue their education, to define their career paths, and to make academic progress. The program provides the discipline to help them go further in their academic and athletic participation. Additionally, the athletic programs give them opportunities to mature and learn qualities of leadership, discipline, and perseverance to get a degree, a trade, or opportunities to transfer to 4-year colleges. Student-athletes have mandatory study halls and mentoring, and some have tutoring to help keep students on a progressive educational path. Without the program, most of those student-athletes would not have enrolled in the community colleges and probably would have missed the opportunities to go to college and achieve higher education past high school.

### *Research Question 3*

The purpose of Research Question 3 was to discover how the student-athletes perceived the role of athletics in preparing them for future careers. All of the student-athletes expressed hopes and plans for their future careers after community college. All of the student-athletes planned to transfer to 4-year schools. Two of the eight had plans to teach and coach. One who was enrolled in the criminal justice program and biology hoped to have a career with the FBI. One had plans for a 4-year degree in business and a career in pharmaceutical sales. One pursuing a degree in biology had plans for medical school or wildlife plant biology. One student, who was undecided on his career choice, was taking general studies to transfer to a 4-year college. Career options that this student was considering were physical therapy or coaching. Two were hoping to play ball professionally or coach. Two of the eight did not plan to participate in athletics at the 4-year colleges, choosing instead to concentrate solely on their chosen career paths.

According to the student-athletes, the opportunities to participate in athletics at the community colleges gave them guidance and assistance in obtaining educational opportunities and planning their career paths. Without the opportunity in athletics, all said they probably would not have entered the community colleges. One of the student-athletes had considered the University of Tennessee after high school, without participating in athletics, but chose the opportunity for a scholarship and participating in athletics at the community college. Five of the eight student-athletes had transferred from 4-year colleges or other community colleges (some out of state) for a variety of reasons: to play for a coach who had moved to a community college, to have another chance after making low grades, to participate in sports closer to home, or to get better with more playing time before transferring to a 4-year college. All of the student-athletes in this study were recruited to participate in athletic programs in college. Without participating in athletics, six of the participants would probably have gotten jobs and not gone to college.

Prior to being recruited to participate in athletics at the community colleges, most had no plans to go to college.

After receiving the assistance of student development services at the community colleges, the tutoring and counseling services of the colleges, faculty and staff support, and a great deal of mentoring and encouragement from coaches and faculty, all of the student-athletes in this study expressed recognition of that assistance in helping them with their educational success and the planning of their career paths. Those student-athletes interviewed indicated that were actively pursuing their career paths.

### *Conclusions*

The review of literature for this study revealed rising costs for athletic programs and rising costs for education at colleges and universities across the country. The literature also revealed that many recognize the value and benefits of intercollegiate athletics for students, the institutions, and the communities served, and they want to keep those programs. Among solutions being suggested are drastic elimination of such programs, reduced funding, or making such programs self-supporting. States faced with budget crises, rising costs, and lacks of funds have already been employing such solutions. Some institutions cut programs, some eliminated programs that were not cost effective, and others required athletic departments to raise private funds to stay active. The review of literature revealed both the negative and positive results of the actions taken by institutions.

THEC's master plan to eliminate all state funds for such programs by the 2007-2008 academic year requires that colleges and universities in the TBR system raise private funds to support athletic programs. Some of the community colleges in the TBR system already raise a portion of funds needed for such programs. The fallout caused by THEC's action remains to be seen. The community colleges in this study do rely on student fees, FTE, scholarships, staff, and facilities to serve the athletes who are full-time students. The participants in this study have

stated that their athletic programs are very frugal and provide opportunities to a large number of students who might not have opportunities without such programs.

Students participating in the athletic programs at TBR community colleges are finding opportunities with student development and career assistance to gain higher education. Participation in athletics is a powerful motivator to succeed in academics. Although a portion of them do come in ill-prepared to do college work, the community college system provides counseling and services to better prepare students to succeed. Compared to some of the 4-year colleges mentioned in this study, the community colleges offer smaller classes and extra individual attention to assist students in making more objective decisions about their futures. The community colleges also provide more opportunities for them to follow their athletic goals while getting an education. Those students with adequate and higher academic standings also have opportunities to reach their athletic goals and dreams to participate at 4-year colleges or professionally while going further in education.

Some of the negative impacts on the community colleges are not the result of what the community colleges have done. The lack of preparation for college work for some of the students lies in the hands of those responsible for preparing those students for college. Remediation classes at the community colleges are offering an opportunity for a second chance for some students who graduated from high school without the prerequisites needed for doing college work. Some students have earned high GPAs and are following their career goals while others are struggling. For those student-athletes taking remedial classes along with many students not participating in athletics, the responsibilities for reaching academic success now belongs to them. While yearly statistics can vary from year to year, too many students need remediation.

The student-athletes in this study represent a spectrum of very good academic backgrounds to very poor academic backgrounds. They also represent the makeup of society:

culturally, racially, economically, and by gender. They have a common ambition—to participate in sports while getting an education.

### *Recommendations*

#### *Recommendations for Future Practice*

The state of Tennessee ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation for adults having a bachelor's degree or higher. The percentage of adults over 25 having a bachelor's degree or higher is 19.6% while the national rate is 24.4%. Only 14 out of 100 of Tennessee's ninth graders go on to receive a college degree or certificate. Tennessee's per capita income ranks 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2005). Those statistics reveal a need to provide better preparation in the primary and secondary educational institutions. As many of the participants in this study revealed, athletics have kept many students in school and motivated them to try to go further.

The community colleges have been given the mission of providing programs that open opportunities for education and careers. They have an open door policy to educate all types of students: the poor, the more economically-disadvantaged, those with high GPAs, those at the lower spectrum, those with high school diplomas, those with GEDs, those adults who have been out of school a number of years, and those newly-graduated from high school. Administration of all of their academic programs requires evaluation of all students entering the programs. Other requirements involve testing and placement for those students who do not possess the minimum ACT/SAT or GPA levels. The community colleges provide a wide range of student development services to compensate for the gaps in enrollees' educational history and their lives. If those student-athletes graduating from high school are deficient in preparation for college work, perhaps, more efforts need to be made at the high school level to better prepare them for college work.

Although community colleges do have some outreach into the high schools in their service areas such as providing college classes for students still in high school, additional



programs to assist the high schools in developing programs could be an answer. Counseling sessions to motivate students earlier to set and achieve career goals might be helpful. Testing services could be established to evaluate before it is too late. Such programs could be designated for the middle-school groups through the high-school groups. There could be a linkage between what the Tennessee Department of Education and the TBR community colleges provide. Better communication should be developed among the State Department of Education, THEC, and TBR to solve problems and find solutions.

4-year colleges in the TBR system require more stringent enrollment prerequisites. They also require higher tuition costs. The perceptions given by both participating presidents and the athletic staffs of their institutions indicated great benefits and successes in the athletic programs. At the same time, they also expressed the problem of too many students in the athletic programs, as well as the entire student body, needing remediation.

For the community colleges to objectively realize their success in educating students participating in the athletic programs, as well as students from all of the other programs offered, a modern tracking system should help define the success of students in completing certificate programs, associate degrees, actual transfers, and postcommunity college degrees earned. As the students interviewed in this study indicated, all but one had a defined career path in progress. To help those students be successful in their quests, assistance in the community college has worked. The problem appears to need resolution prior to enrollment at the college level.

As a start in assisting students to better prepare for college work, summer sessions dealing strictly with remediation coursework could be developed. Some community colleges already offer remediation courses in summer sessions, and schedules are published or given to area high schools. Better communication links with the high schools and students needing further preparation for college work should be developed. More students could then get on track early and learn more about their strengths and weaknesses through the community colleges'

student development services and take the summer session remedial classes before fall enrollment.

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

In analyzing the literature and the data from this study, the alarming estimates of students needing remediation classes warranted additional investigation. While the unverified personal estimates made by some of the participants in this study were shockingly high, it was even more shocking to find that the percentage of all high school graduates needing remediation classes is very high all over the country. It is a national problem (Southern Regional Education Board, 2000). Groups and individuals from all over the country are trying to assess the failures in educational systems, the lack of preparation for high school graduates, and the high costs of college education (Capriccioso, 2005). More studies are needed to find the best solutions.

Quantitative research studies should be conducted to determine the actual successes of students by following their career paths to certificates and degrees obtained to attainment of jobs.

To obtain more relevancy of retention, a study comparing groups of student-athletes to specific or random groups in the entire student body should be conducted. The results of different studies made about the TBR institutions' student development services, and the attainment of certificates, degrees, transfers, 4-year degrees, and job placements should be posted on an easily-accessible TBR website.

To better serve the state educational systems and to improve the community college system, regular surveys should be taken with past students to look for satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction in the offerings and services of the community college system.

Studies should be conducted to determine what the public high schools in Tennessee are providing to assure that students are graduating with the required prerequisites to do college work.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Demographic Information of Tennessee Community Colleges

Chattanooga State Community College, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Bledsoe, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, Rhea, Sequatchie

Cleveland State Technical Community College, Cleveland, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Bradley, Meigs, McMinn, Monroe, Polk

Columbia State Community College, Columbia, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Marshall, Maury, Perry, Wayne, Williamson

Dyersburg State Community College, Dyersburg, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Lake, Lauderdale, Obion, Tipton

Jackson State Community College, Jackson, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Madison, McNairy, Weakley

Motlow State Community College, Tullahoma, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Bedford, Cannon, Coffee, Dekalb, Franklin, Lincoln, Moore, Rutherford, Van Buren, Warren, White

Nashville State Technical Community College, Nashville, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, Stewart

Northeast State Technical Community College, Bristol, Tennessee

Serves Counties: Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington



Pellissippi State Technical Community College, Knoxville, Tennessee

Serves Counties:      Knox, Blount

Roane State Community College, Harriman, Tennessee

Serves Counties:      Campbell, Cumberland, Fentress, Loudon,  
Roane, Scott

Southwest Tennessee Community College, Memphis, Tennessee

Serves Counties:      Fayette, Shelby

Volunteer State Community College, Gallatin, Tennessee

Serves Counties:      Clay, Davidson, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett,  
Putnam, Robertson, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Wilson

Walters State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee

Serves Counties:      Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock,  
Hawkins, Jefferson, Sevier, Union

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Guide to the Presidents

1. What is the purpose(s) of having an athletic program at your community college?
2. What is the general feeling of other employees on your campus (faculty, staff, administrators) about having athletics at your institution?
3. What function do you see yourself performing in the operation of the athletic program at your institution?
4. Will athletic programs continue in the community college system of Tennessee for the next 15 to 20 years? Why or why not?
5. What effect does the athletic program have on your institution?
6. Does your athletic program affect the enrollment at your institution?
7. Without athletics at your institution, would there be an impact on enrollment?
8. How does your athletic program impact your institution's operating budget?
9. How do other community college presidents feel about the role of athletics in their institutions?
10. Do you feel there are other reasons, other than "financial crisis", behind THEC's recommendation to discontinue funding for athletics in the TBR Community College System?
11. What do you hope your student-athletes will accomplish during your tenure at this institution?
12. Do you believe that they are accomplishing what you hope for them?
13. What are the challenges in having an athletic program at the community college level?
14. Would the young men and women who participate as student-athletes at your college have an equal chance to succeed in life if athletics were not offered?
15. Do the community college athletic programs receive adequate publicity from area media? Why is that?
16. Do student-athletes learn values different from those learned by students who do not participate in athletics? If so, what are those values?
17. Do former student-athletes attribute any of their post-college successes to participation in athletics? If so, in what ways?
18. How do athletic programs affect the mission and goals of the college?

## APPENDIX C

### Interview Guide to the Athletic Directors

1. What are the effects of having an athletic program at a community college?
2. What are the general feelings of your fellow employees about having athletics at your institution?
3. What do you want the student-athletes under your supervision to achieve during their stay at your institution?
4. Do you believe that they are accomplishing what you want for them? Why or why not?
5. Do you have challenges in getting the media to publicize your athletic events? Why or why not?
6. What are your perceptions regarding how your coaches work toward the goals you set for student-athletes at your institution? What about institutional goals?
7. What challenges exist in getting student-athletes to achieve what you want them to achieve at your institution?
8. What factors are most important for the growth and maturity of student-athletes at your college?
9. How would you define the impact of athletic programs on your institution (e.g. cultural, social, economic, etc.)?
10. How would you describe the impact on your institution if the athletic programs were eliminated?
11. What are your perceptions regarding the relationship of participation in athletics in college to the achievements of student-athletes after college?
12. What are your observations when comparing the retention rates of student-athletes to non-student-athletes?
13. Is there any value to giving student-athletes from outside your college service area opportunities to participate in athletics at your community college? If so, what is the value?
14. How would you describe, demographically and with personal attributes, the student-athletes who enroll in your college?
15. Can you give some success stories of student-athletes from your college?
16. Do you feel there are other reasons, other than “financial crisis” behind THEC’s recommendation to discontinue funding for athletics in the TBR Community College System?
17. How does the athletic program at your college affect the college’s operating budget?
18. How do athletic programs affect the mission and goals of the college?

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Guide to the Coaches

1. How would you describe your role in the personal development of student-athletes in your sport?
2. How would you describe the academic development of your student-athletes?
3. What level of academic and athletic preparation do you think your student-athletes have prior to their enrollment at your institution?
4. What characteristics do you look for in future student-athletes?
5. What factors separate those student-athletes who have a good chance to graduate from those who do not?
6. What impact does the athletic program have on your community college?
7. What role do you play in assisting your student-athletes in their academic endeavors?
8. To what degree do your faculty and staff support the college athletic program?
9. What effect does your athletic program have on your college's operation budget?
10. How much influence do you have in the success or failure of your athletes in their academic endeavors?
11. What do you think the college community would like to see the athletic program accomplish?
12. Does your local media support your athletic program? Why or why not?
13. How do athletic programs affect the mission and goals of the college?
14. What do you perceive as the greatest determinant for a student-athlete's success at your college?
15. How would you compare the retention rate of student-athletes at your college with the retention rate of students who do not participate in athletic programs?

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Guide to the Student Athletes

1. Before enrolling at this college, where did you reside?
2. Explain why you chose to come to this community college.
3. What other options would you have considered?
4. What do you see as your next step after community college?
5. Has your academic experience been impacted by the fact that you are a student-athlete? Why or why not?
6. Have there been staff members or support services that have been particularly helpful to you?
7. In what occupational field do you desire to work after college?
8. What reasons, besides receiving a scholarship, do you have for participating in athletics at this college?
9. Do you believe your institution supports athletics? Why or why not?
10. Do you believe you have the assistance you need to succeed as both a student and athlete?
11. Do you believe you develop other values and receive other benefits different from those students who do not participate in athletics? If so, what are those values or benefits?
12. List two or three well-known people (other than sports celebrities) whom you admire and are in your career interest.
13. List 2-3 steps that you are planning to use to reach your career goal. What impact do you think being an athlete will have on these next steps?
14. Is there anything that your coach has told you on a regular basis that has stayed in your memory and helped you? What is it?
15. Is the President of your college supportive of your sport? How could he be more supportive?
16. What do you want to accomplish by attending college?

## APPENDIX F

### Letter to the Presidents

Dear Dr. President (A)/(B):

Thank you for recently taking time recently to take my telephone call, listening to my proposal, and agreeing to participate in my study. Hopefully, your participation will allow me to compile a clear evaluation of where we are in community college athletics in the Tennessee Board of Regents system. I know that your responsibilities cover diverse areas, and I hope that this study will provide more insight to the role of athletics in the TBR system.

With your permission, I would like to conduct interviews with you, your athletic director, two coaches, and five student-athletes from your institution. Attached with this letter are the interview questions for each group. As you can see, the questions are somewhat different from one group to another. My hope is that the compilation of the responses will provide more enriching data for my study.

My other request is to have access to any of your information records that can provide information on student retention, budgets and expenses allocated to athletics, and revenue generated from athletics. I realize that this access will require the cooperation of Business Affairs, Financial Aid, athletics, and others, but I believe this can be done in a timely and confidential fashion.

Please be assured that all of the information given to me will be kept strictly confidential, and will not be used in any way to reflect negatively on you, your staff, or your institution. My plan is to have you review the findings from the information from your institution. Only after you have approved it, will I submit the findings to my committee at East Tennessee State University.

I am looking forward to meeting you and your staff as I work through this next step of my program. I will set up an interview date through your secretary. If you have any concerns about the interview questions, or my study in general, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Lee Cigliano  
###/xxx/xxxx

## APPENDIX G

### Informed Consent Form

#### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

East Tennessee State University  
Veterans Affairs Medical Center

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The purpose of this note of **INFORMED CONSENT** is to explain a research project in which I am requesting your participation. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. By no means is there any pressure for you to participate in this research project.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the impact athletics in selected community colleges has on students, the institution, and the community. More specifically, the goal of this study is to provide information to state legislatures and presidents so they can take the results of this study to determine what benefits, or lack of benefits are derived from having an athletic program in a community college.

#### DURATION

Participants of the study are asked to participate in a face-to-face interview at the location of the participant's work place. If a face-to-face interview is not feasible, a telephone interview will be conducted. Due to the emergent nature of qualitative research and individual interviews, the duration of each session cannot be pre-determined, and may vary from person to person. After each interview is transcribed by the researcher, a transcript will be sent to the participant for review. The participant will be given the opportunity to make any additions, corrections and/or comments concerning the transcription. The participant will be given the opportunity to return the comments and corrections to the researcher.

If you are personally interested in the results of this study, you may indicate your e-mail address below and an electronic copy will be sent to you by August 25, 2005.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

ver. (date)

\_\_\_\_ Subject Initials

## PROCEDURES

A letter will be sent to each participant that will explain the research project. A personal phone call will be made to the participant within approximately a week after the letter is received. Participants will be asked to complete an *Interview Participant Agreement* prior to the interview. Each participant will receive a copy of the interview questions prior to the interview. The interview will be scheduled at the participant's convenience. The interview will be audio-taped recorded to insure transcript accuracy. After each interview is transcribed by the researcher, a transcript will be sent to the participant for review. The participant will be given the opportunity to make any additions, corrections and/or comments concerning the transcription. The participant will be given the opportunity to return the comments and corrections to the researcher.

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION

By participating in this research project, it is believed that each group of participants will benefit. Presidents will gain information about his institution that will be useful in supporting his athletic programs. With a better understanding of the special needs of athletic directors, coaches, and most importantly, student-athletes, the presidents will have a better idea of the challenges facing all those directly involved in a community college athletic program, and consequently, positioned in a better place for planning an athletic program. Athletic Directors will have a better understanding of the challenges facing coaches and student-athletes and take the useful information from this study to have constructive communication between he and the presidents and coaches. Coaches should learn information that will be useful in retaining their student-athletes. Student-athletes should have a better understanding of their role and the goals and expectations of the institution he or she is representing.

No compensation will be given. A token of appreciation, such as a restaurant gift card, will be given to each participant at the end of the face-to-face interview.

## POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

No risks or discomforts should be associated with this research. However, while it is unlikely, there may be a possibility that participants may experience discomfort when addressing some of the interview questions. Participants may choose not to answer or discuss any items that provoke such feelings.

ver. (date)

\_\_\_\_ Subject Initials



### CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems, or research related medical problems at any time, you may call Lee Cigliano at 423-614-8706 or 423-322-1463, or Professor Nancy Dishner at 423-439-7619. You may also call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6055 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. I understand that I will select a pseudonym for my participation in this project in order to make it less likely to be identified within the study. A copy of the records from this study will be stored at the East Tennessee State University Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming me as a subject. Although my rights and privacy will be maintained, the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, research related personnel from the ETSU Department of Health and Human Services have access to study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

### COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any injury, which may happen as a result of your being in this study. They will not pay for any other medical treatment. Claims against ETSU or any of its agents or employees may be submitted to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be settled to the extent allowable as provided under TCA Section 9-8-307. For more information about claims call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board of ETSU at 423-439-6055.

### VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The nature, demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. A signed copy has been given to me.

ver. (date)

\_\_\_\_ Subject Initials

My study record will be maintained in strictest confidence, according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

---

*SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER*

*DATE*

---

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

APPENDIX H

Dissertation Transcription Review

*Lee Cigliano*  
*East Tennessee State University*  
*ELPA Doctoral Student*

Director \_\_\_\_\_

System \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed the enclosed transcription and am returning the transcript with revisions and notations written on the transcript.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed the transcript as submitted to me and do not wish to make additions, corrections, or notations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Community College Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX I

### Auditor's Certification

I served as an auditor for the following study: A Perceptual Study of the Impact of Athletic Programs in Selected Community Colleges in the State of Tennessee.

---

Dr. Joy Yates

---

Date

## APPENDIX J

### Debriefers' Certification

I served as a debriefer for the following study: A Perceptual Study of the Impact of Athletic Programs in Selected Community Colleges in the State of Tennessee.

---

Dr. Ruby Porter

---

Date

VITA  
LEE MARTIN CIGLIANO

Personal Data:      Date of Birth: June 3, 1966  
                         Place of Birth: Middletown, Ohio  
                         Marital Status: Married

Education:            Cleveland State Community College, Cleveland, Tennessee;  
                         Associate of Science,  
                         1986  
  
                         Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee;  
                         Bachelor of Business Administration,  
                         1988  
  
                         East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
                         Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.;  
                         2006

Professional  
Experience:            Notre Dame High School, Chattanooga, Tennessee;  
                         Government and Economics Teacher,  
                         Assistant Boys Basketball Coach  
                         1988-1989  
  
                         Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Kentucky;  
                         Graduate Assistant Basketball Coach,  
                         1989-1990  
  
                         Donelson Christian Academy, Nashville, Tennessee;  
                         Business and Typing Teacher,  
                         Head Boys Basketball Coach / Head Girls Tennis Coach  
                         1990-1993  
  
                         Madisonville High School, Madisonville, Tennessee;  
                         English Teacher & Head Boys Basketball Coach,  
                         1992-1993  
  
                         Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina;  
                         Assistant Men's Basketball Coach & Coordinator of Drug & Alcohol  
                         Education,  
                         1993-1994

Professional  
Experience  
(continued):

Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee;  
Associate Director of Admissions,  
1994-1996

Cleveland State Community College, Cleveland, Tennessee;  
Head Men's Basketball Coach and Admissions,  
1996-Present